

THE TRINITY

Is It Biblical?

Can we find evidence for this widely held belief? This is no small matter since some would have you believe that if you're not in agreement with this teaching, you cannot be a real Christian.

Can this be true?

The apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, made an interesting statement in the course of this epistle that reveals a truth most Trinitarians would deny. He said, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20) (emphasis mine).

Understandably, what he is saying is that we can understand the spiritual (the invisible) clearly, by understanding the things that are made (the visible). In other words, the "spiritually invisible things" are understood by observing the "visible material things" that are made, just as one what this includes, "even his eternal power and Godhead!" This is contrary to what all Trinitarians will tell you. As far as they're concerned, you cannot understand the Trinity, which defines for them the Godhead. Yet the Bible tells us we can understand the Godhead along with His eternal power! Obviously, the Trinitarian belief that means you cannot understand the Godhead is in conflict with the Bible. However, if we approach this without bias, it's easy enough to understand how this happened. Understandably, the historical record of how the Trinitarian concept developed is easy enough to investigate and determine how and who advanced it and ultimately defined it. In summary, the truth of the matter is that it was developed over hundreds of years by the many councils convened by the Catholic (Roman) Church. Officially, it began to formulate and take on some definition at the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. In 381 C.E., the Council of Constantinople determined the Holy Spirit was co-equal with the Father and Christ the Son. Over the following centuries, it finally became a dogmatic creed, defining God as "three eternal co-equal persons" (one God in three persons).

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How do the Trinity and the traditional view of the nature of God compare with the Bible?

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"The necessary requirements of the faith of the early Christian theologians were derived, naturally, by the kind of theology then emerging from the dominant religious vision of the culture within which emerging Christianity then had to struggle" (*Wormwheat Dictionary of Christian Theology*, p. 927).

The Trinitarian teaching was just one of many dominant heretical doctrines throughout the area where the original Christian Church was forming. Ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Siberians, Indians, and even the Japanese all had their "three in one" gods.

"[The recognition of the Trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world]" (*The True Religion*, p.18, Alexander Hislop).

Many centuries prior to the time of Christ, belief in gods was common and prominent throughout Egypt, Babylon, India, Persia, Germany, Italy, Norway, Kinschuck, and Polynesia. Pagan deities such as Osiris, Isis, Vishnu, Ganes, Isis, and Hams were just a few that were typical in those cultures.

Much of this contributed to the confusion for Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, and others who were affected by these concepts and later became the influential force behind the Hellenistic movement, whose teachings contributed to the early New Testament Christian Church. Hellenism—the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different modes or forms, of the same person—also developed very early and is found in some churches today.

So What Does the Bible Teach?

If the Bible doesn't teach Trinitarianism or Modalism, what does it teach? Unquestionably, the Bible teaches us that it is possible to understand YHWH's "eternal power and Godhead." So if we can, what is it? How does the Bible explain it?

The following scriptures and commentary should help to clarify the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a labor to help us identify what the Bible

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The apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, made an interesting statement in the course of this epistle that reveals a truth most Trinitarians would deny. He said, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, **even his eternal power and Godhead**; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20, emphasis mine).

Unmistakably, what he is saying is that we

can understand the spiritual (the invisible) *clearly*, by understanding the things that are made (the visible). In other words, the “spiritually invisible things” are *understood by observing* the “visible material things” that are made; but notice what this includes: “even His eternal power and Godhead!” This is contrary to what all Trinitarians will tell you. As far as they’re concerned, you *cannot* understand the Trinity, which defines for them the Godhead. Yet the Bible tells us we *can* understand the Godhead, along with His eternal power! Obviously, the Trinitarian belief that states you cannot understand the Godhead is in conflict with the Bible. However, if we approach this *without* bias, it’s easy enough to understand how this happened. Undeniably, the historical record of how the Trinitarian concept developed is easy enough to investigate and determine how and who advanced it and ultimately defined it. In summary, the truth of the matter is that it was developed over hundreds of years by

the many councils conducted by the Catholic (Universal) Church. Officially, it began to formulate and take on some definition at the Council of Nicaea in 352 C.E. In 381 C.E., the Council of Constantinople determined the Holy Spirit was on the same level as the Father and Christ the Son. Over the following centuries, it finally became a dogmatic creed, defining God as “three eternal coexistent persons” (one God in three persons).

Sadly, due to the severe pressure of the pagan religions surrounding the development of the early Christian Church, in conjunction with the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire, the Church became compromised. Christian thinking was strongly influenced by the heathen cultures throughout the Roman Empire.

“The missionary requirements of the task of the early Christian theologian were dictated, naturally, by the kind of theology then emerging from the dominant religious vision

of the culture within which emerging Christianity then had to grapple” (*Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, p. 582).

The Trinitarian teaching was just one of many dominant heretical doctrines throughout the area where the original Christian Church was forming. Ancient Babylonians, Assyrians, Siberians, Indians, and even the Japanese all had their “three in one” gods.

“[T]he recognition of the Trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world” (*The Two Babylons*, p.18, Alexander Hislop).

Many centuries prior to the time of Christ, belief in *triads of gods* was common and prominent throughout Egypt, Babylon, India, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Kampuchea, and Palmyra. Pagan deities such as Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, Osiris, Isis, and Horus were just a few that were typified in triune fashion.

Much of this contributed to the mind-set for

Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Socrates, and others who were affected by these concepts and later became the influential force behind the Hellenistic movement, whose teachings encroached on the early New Testament Christian Church.

Modalism—the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different modes, or forms, of the same person—also developed very early and is found in some churches today.

So What Does the Bible Teach?

If the Bible doesn't teach Trinitarianism or Modalism, what does it teach?

Unequivocally, the Bible tells us that it *is* possible to understand YHWH's "eternal power and Godhead." So if we can, what is it? How does the Bible explain it?

The following scriptures and commentary should help to clarify the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a listing to help us identify *what the Bible says and defines* as the relationship these three have

with one another. The Bible should always remain our final authority, not the councils or traditions of men (Matthew 15:7–9).

Genesis 1:26:

“And God [*Elohim*] said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

Elohim is the plural of *Eloah*, and the plural pronouns (“us,” “our”) indicate a plurality of persons were involved in making man.

Otherwise, YHVH is talking to Himself.

Matthew 1:18, 20 (cf. Hebrews 1:5):

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy [Spirit]...the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy [Spirit].”

Jesus did not beget Himself. He was

“begotten” by His Father, using the power of His Holy Spirit. Otherwise, if we accept the Trinitarian view, the Holy Spirit would be

the father, and the Father would be the uncle.

Matthew 7:21:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Clearly, Jesus is making the statement that His Father was in heaven while He was on earth, undeniably indicating they were two separate individuals.

Matthew 20:23:

“And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

Undoubtedly, Jesus is saying it was not within His authority to award these positions. That was reserved for the Father exclusively, proving again they were separate, with distinctive authority.

Psalms 110:1 (cf. Matthew 22:44):

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

The Old Testament corresponds with the duality of the Godhead. Jesus was not saying anything new. His ministry simply clarified the distinction.

Matthew 26:39:

“And He went a little further, 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.”

This is a clear indication that Jesus is doing the will of another. Otherwise, He wouldn't have said, “nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.”

Matthew 27:46 and Mark 13:32:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

Unquestionably, this shows there are two deities working separately, knowing

separate things the other doesn't know. There is no doubt the Scripture explains Jesus does not know everything the Father does.

Luke 23:46:

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”

The Greek word *ruach* means “breath of life”—Jesus gave up His breath, putting Himself, His life, in total trust to the Father, who is characterized as a separate deity in this context.

John 1:18:

“No man hath seen God [the Father] at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

The Bible is emphatic: no one has seen the Father. Some saw Jesus before His human birth as the “God” of the Old Testament.

They also saw Him when He was flesh, and after He was resurrected. But nobody has

seen the Father, only Christ Himself—clearly indicating there are two beings.

John 8:17–18:

“It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.”

We are distinctly told that the Father and Christ make up a single family of two individuals. One witness plus one additional witness equals two witnesses, but a single family, a team.

John 14:28:

“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”

Jesus differentiates between Himself and the Father by conceding the fact that the Father is greater than Himself.

John 16:7–14:

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go

not away, the Comforter [Greek *parakletos*] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him [it] unto you...

Howbeit when he [it], the Spirit of truth, is come, he [it] will guide you into all truth: for he [it] shall not speak of himself [itself]; but whatsoever he [it] shall hear, that shall he [it] speak: and he [it] will shew you things to come. He [It] shall glorify me: for he [it] shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Jesus explains this *parakletos* as a power that will guide His followers into all truth.

The pronoun "he" is grammatically correct, because the word *parakletos* is a masculine noun. The "he" does not mean the Holy Spirit is a person.

John 17:1:

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."

Obviously, Jesus was not praying to Himself. He undoubtedly knew that His

Father was there, and He was concerned about representing Him honorably under these conditions.

John 17:3:

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

Jesus is clearly illustrating that there is a sender and one who is sent. His Father is the sender. He was the One who was sent by the Father. Jesus Christ is God’s Apostle, which means “one who is sent” (see Hebrews 3:1).

John 17:20-2:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”

Here, Jesus is illustrating that His followers should become one as He and the Father are one. Obviously, that does not mean the loss

of one's individual sovereignty as a separate being. We have seen that Christ and His Father are separate beings functioning as one in unity of Spirit.

1 Corinthians 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.”

One Father and one Lord Jesus Christ equals two beings working together as one, unified in purpose. Both are immortal deities serving in different functions.

1 Corinthians 11:3:

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

God the Father is over all, including Jesus Christ, just as a man is over a woman, but undeniably they are separate beings—beings described as different, not the same!

1 Corinthians 15:15:

“Yea, and we are found false witnesses of

God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.”

God the Father raised Christ from being completely dead! If God were a trinity, only one-third of God would have died! We are told Christ came in the flesh so He could die (Hebrews 2:9), and that Jesus purged our sins by Himself (Hebrews 1:3). Clearly, this God being, Jesus Christ, died for mankind, and the Father raised Him up.

1 Corinthians 15:24:

“Then cometh the end, when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.”

Jesus intends to hand over the kingdom to the Father eventually. He is not handing it over to Himself. This is a clear indication they are separate beings working toward a common goal for each other.

Colossians 1:15:

“[Jesus] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”

Adam was created in God's image, yet Adam was not a part of any triune relationship. He was a separate being from the Father. Jesus was also made in the image of the Father but He, too, was a separate entity.

1 Timothy 2:5:

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Clearly, this illustrates there are two beings functioning in different roles, making up this present family.

1 John 4:15:

“Whosoever shall confess [by his words and life style] that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

We do not become part of a trinity if we confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world. We remain separate individuals retaining our own sovereignty as independent beings, free to express our own unique personalities.

John 10:34-36 (compare Psalms 82:6):

“Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

Notice that Jesus says He is the Son of God rather than the Father Himself, unquestionably proving that Jesus was a separate sovereign being, but according to the Law, considering Himself a God.

Though many more scriptures could be used to illustrate the distinction between these two beings and the Holy Spirit, the above listed scriptures serve to substantiate they are indeed two sovereign deities making up a family, currently of two. The Holy Spirit is the power by which those who are called will be empowered to overcome their human nature, becoming part of the divine nature of God (see John 16:7–15 and 2 Peter 1:3–4); and ultimately inheriting

sonship, by adoption, with Christ making them co-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:11–23). Understanding the Godhead and His eternal power is *not* about the Trinity at all. Instead, understanding His Godhead and eternal power is all about being adopted and becoming part of the family—the God family! (See Ephesians 3:14–15 and Romans 8:15–17.) What an awesome destiny we’ve been given, providing we submit to our Savior, Jesus Christ, and live according to His values!

Quotes About the Trinity

“The Trinity of God is confessedly a great mystery, something wholly beyond the possibility of complete explanation” (*New Scofield Reference Bible*, page 1046).

The Trinity: “The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who has tried to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind; but he who would

deny the Trinity will lose his soul” (*A Handbook of Christian Truth* by Harold Lindsell and Charles Woodbridge, pp. 51–52).

Pagan Origin: “The doctrine of trinity is of pagan origin. Trinity, like the false doctrine of the soul’s immortality, crept into the theology of the church gradually during the early centuries... Pagans who apparently were not thoroughly converted became members of the visible church. As these men assumed places of leadership as teachers and theologians, the theology of the church gradually was paganized. The teachings of the Bible were re-interpreted and adjusted to fit the teachings of pagan theology” (*Systematic Theology*, A.G. Huffer, 1960, p. 65).

“The ‘trinity’ is a corruption borrowed from the heathen religions, and ingrafted on the Christian faith” (*A Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, Lyman Abbott, 1875,

page 944).

“The Platonic trinity, itself merely a rearrangement of older trinities dating back to earlier peoples, appears to be the rational philosophic trinity of attributes that gave birth” (T. Enright, C.S.S.R., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1884