

What is the Trinity?

By

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God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, reveals Himself in the Bible. The Bible clearly tells us there is only one God. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). At the same time, we encounter multiple passages in the Bible that show that the one God consists of more persons. This is hard for us to understand. We should realize that is not because of a logical contradiction, but because of our limitations. That the complexity and beauty of God’s being surpasses our understanding is not strange. He is God and we are man.

Plurality in God

When we take the passages that are talking about a plurality in God together, we see there are actually three persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is what we call the Trinity. The term Trinity is not used in the Bible. But the concept is clearly there. It means one God in three persons.

In the Old Testament there are various verses that distinguish between God the Father and God the Son. A clear example is Psalm 110:1, where David says: “The LORD says to my Lord...” Since David as king did not have any earthly lord, he must refer here to a heavenly Lord who is distinct from the LORD. Jesus confirms this when He claims this verse is about Him and implies that He is the Son of God (Matthew 22:41-45).

In other verses, a distinction is made between the Lord and His Spirit. For example, Isaiah 48:16: “And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and His Spirit.” It is obvious that someone cannot be thought of apart from His spirit. Yet a distinction is made. Already in the Old Testament, we find verses that point us towards God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. So God the Son did not come into existence with the birth of Jesus Christ. He is eternal, just like the Father and the Spirit. But in Jesus He became flesh.

New Testament

The New Testament makes this all much clearer. Many verses teach us about the divinity of God the Father. One example is 1 Corinthians 8:6. “For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things.” Many verses teach us about the divinity of God the Son. One example is Titus 2:13: “...the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Many verses teach us about the divinity of God the Holy Spirit. One example is 1 Corinthians 6:11: “You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

In several places in the New Testament, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are mentioned next to each other. In a way, that leaves no doubt that they are equal and equally God. These include:

“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).

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of

the Holy Spirit. He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing” (Acts 2:32-33).

“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).

“...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit. For obedience to Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2).

We need all three

So God reveals himself in the Bible as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We need them all. God the Father is our creator. God the Son is our Savior. And God the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. When we cannot completely wrap our heads around the concept of a God who is three-in-one, let us just break out in praise:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Source: <https://www.biblword.net/what-is-the-trinity/>

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