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What About The Trinity? Pt. 1 #38

The Trinity is a doctrine hard to understand by some and completely denied by others.

The doctrine of the Trinity very simply put is the Christian teaching and belief that God is comprised of three persons existing eternally in one nature and essence.

1. The oneness is so real that it flows into the three persons.
2. Yet they are distinct in persons, but one in substance in the fundamental nature that the three persons possess.

In the study of the “Nature of God” there are two important things about God’s nature.

1. God is Spirit. Jn. 4:24
2. God is personal. Jn. 17:1-3

The doctrine of the Trinity falls under the study of “The nature of God”.

Two other important aspects to the nature of God are found in the nature of the Trinity.

1. Unity.
2. Tri-unity.

And only God can illuminate the Scriptures and give to us understanding regarding the Trinity, yet many

people have allowed their intellect to rob them of their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.

We want to begin to answer the question, “What about the Trinity by examining three facets of unity and the Trinity.

- I. The mystery of unity and the Trinity.
- II. The unity of God.
- III. The nature of Divine unity.

I. The mystery of unity and the Trinity.

- A. The term mystery in the Scriptures is used different from the way we normally understand it.
 1. I don’t mean something that is hidden from us as much as the inability to understand it completely from a rational point of view or reason of logic.
 2. The word mystery “mysterion” is found in the New Testament.
 - a. The word comes from the root “muo” to shut the mouth.
 - b. The word “mysterion” means something previously hidden but now made known or revealed.
 3. Certain things were concealed in the Old Testament in their full understanding but now revealed in the New Testament.
 - a. The mystery of Israel’s blindness till the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, the mystery of the gospel. Rom. 11:25

- b. The mystery of the resurrection and rapture. 1Cor. 15:51
 - c. The mystery of the gospel of fellowship of the Gentiles with God. Eph. 3:9
 - d. The mystery of the lawless one already at work but can not be revealed till the church is removed. 2Thess. 2:7-8
 - e. One of these mysteries is the Trinity as Paul tells Timothy of the Incarnation and glorification of Jesus by the Holy Spirit, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.” 1Tim. 3:16
 - f. Paul’s benediction to the Corinthians depicts the Trinity, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” 2Cor. 13:14
4. The desire of Paul was that the Colossians would understand the mystery of the Godhead revealed in Christ. Col. 2:1-3
- * “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the

- knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
5. The unity of the Trinity is God’s revelation of Himself to man about Himself and His Godhead, who is infinite and transcendent.
- a. Paul puts it this way to the Corinthians, “However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God”. 1Cor. 2:6-10
 - b. God through the Scriptures does not go out of His way to prove the Trinity, He simply states the Trinity as a fact just as He did regarding His existence.

B. The problem lies in man's persistent demands to be able to understand everything about the unity and Trinity of God by way of his intellect, as he would understand mathematics, science or engineering.

1. Man is finite trying to understand the infinite things of God.
2. God in His sovereignty has chosen to reveal to man a certain amount of understandable truths by his Holy Spirit that in view of what we understand by God's grace to be true, we can by faith equally be assured that what we cannot understand is just as true as what we do understand.

* Much like I understand electricity to a certain point and then I accept it on what I do understand and receive the benefit.

3. Two scriptures will help us to see this truth, one from the Old and New Testament.
 - a. Moses declared God would bring Israel back after her apostasy despite the seeming impossibility, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. 29:29
 - * The word secret as we stated has as its root, to be hidden, to be hid.
 - b. Jesus declared "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not

receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" Jn. 3:11-12

- C. The mystery of unity and the Trinity is not contrary to reason.
 1. Thomas Aquinas talked about the liberating affect of accepting by faith in revelation such doctrines as that of the Trinity, which cannot be attained to by reason. He said, that mere reason chains us down to what is merely logical—to what our own mental capacities can deduce.
 2. Tertullian one of the early church Fathers of 165-220 A.D., a theologian of the West wrote in Latin and said in his important treatise Against Praxeas, a treatise on the Trinity, "This...is unity in trinity...Father, Son, and Spirit---three.. but one nature and of reality and of one power, because there is one God".
 3. Augustine the most influential church father, 354-430 A.D. said, "No one should "wonder and think it absurd that we should call the Father God, the son God, the Holy Spirit God, and that nevertheless we should say that there are not three Gods in that Trinity, but one God and one substance."
 4. Herbert Lockyer says the following about the Trinity, "Our narrow thoughts can no

more comprehend the Trinity than a nutshell can hold all the water in the ocean.”

5. The Trinity is above human reason, but not contrary to reason as Henry Theissen states, “Revelation concerning a trinity of Persons related in one Essence contradicts no absolute truth. It is evident that as to wholly separated and individually identified subjects, one is not three, nor are three one. Such is a contradiction. The doctrine of the Trinity asserts no such inconsistency.”
6. Augustine declared his reasoning to the difficulty of understanding the doctrine, listen to it, “And I do not doubt that all this was divinely arranged for the purpose of subduing pride by toil, and of preventing a feeling of satiety in the intellect, which generally holds in small esteem what is discovered without difficulty”.

Illustration

Many illustrations have been used by people in attempts to present a clear picture of the Trinity, but all fall short if they are pushed too far, such as:

1. An egg has the shell, the white and the yoke.
2. An orange has the peel, the white inner skin and the orange.
3. An individual being is body, soul and spirit.

This is the mystery of unity and the Trinity is revealed in the Scriptures!

II. The Unity of God.

- A. When we speak about the unity of God, we are referring to the oneness of the three persons of the Godhead, yet being one God is distinct and opposed to the following:
 1. Polytheism is the belief in multiplicity of gods.
 2. Pantheism is the belief that everything is god.
 3. Tritheism is the belief of three gods.
 4. Duelism is the belief of two gods, good and evil.
 5. Monism is the belief in One God, having no trinity.
- B. The Scriptures reveal the unity of God and expound it throughout the Bible.
 1. In Deuteronomy it says, “To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is **none other** besides Him.” Deut. 4:35
 2. Moses in recording the “Shema” of Israel says, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD God is **one LORD**”. Deut. 6:4
 - a. The name LORD is the four letter called the Tetragrammaton, YHWH or YHVH.
 - b. Jesus answered the scribe, “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel:

The Lord our God is one Lord.” Mark. 12:29

4. God says through Isaiah, “Before me there was **no god** formed, nor shall there be after me.” Is. 43:10
 5. God say, “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: `I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me **there is no God**”. Is. 44:6
 6. To the Corinthians Paul says, “But to us there is but **one** God.” 1Cor. 8:4, 6a
 7. Paul told the Colossians, “Christ is the image of the invisible God, the **first born** of every creature.” Col. 1:15
* The word firstborn “prototokos” means first in rank, supremacy, and authority.
 8. Paul tells Timothy, “For there is **one** God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus”. 1Tim. 2:5
 9. To the Hebrew the author referring to Jesus calls Him, “the **firstbegotten** into the world.” Heb. 1:6
 10. John calls Jesus the **firstbegotten** from the dead. Rev. 1:5
- C. There are also distinctions between the persons of the Godhead.
1. God from Spirit. Gen. 1:1-2
* “In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the

- face of the deep. And the **Spirit** of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”
2. God’s Spirit in Joshua. Num. 27:18
* “And the LORD said to Moses: “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the **Spirit**, and lay your hand on him.”
 3. Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. 1Sam. 16:14
* “But the **Spirit of the LORD** departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.”
 4. Yahweh from Yahweh. Gen. 19:24
* “Then the **LORD** rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the **LORD** out of the heavens.”
 5. God from God. Gen. 19:29
* “And it came to pass, when **God** destroyed the cities of the plain, that **God** remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.”
 6. God from your God. Ps. 45:6-7; “Heb. 1:8-9”
* “Your throne, O **God**, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore **God**, Your **God**, has anointed

You With the oil of gladness more than
Your companions.”

7. Yahweh from Adonai by Jesus. Ps. 110:1;
“Matt. 22:44”
* “The **LORD** said to my **Lord**, "Sit at My
right hand, Till I make Your enemies
Your footstool.”
8. I and Lord from Me and Son. Ps. 2:7 “Heb.
1:5”
* “**I** will declare the decree: The **LORD** has
said to **Me**, `You are My **Son**, Today I
have begotten You.
9. I from Lord their God”. Hos. 1:7
* Yet **I** will have mercy on the house of
Judah, Will save them by the **LORD**
their God, And will not save them by
bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses
or horsemen.”
10. Me from the One. Micah 5:2
* “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though
you are little among the thousands of
Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to
Me The **One** to be Ruler in Israel, Whose
goings forth are from of old, From
everlasting.”

Illustration

Jesus said, “I and the Father are one, if you have seen
Me, you have seen the Father who sent Me.

The Unity of God is throughout the Scriptures!

III. Nature of Divine Unity.

- A. The unity of God is distinct from a unit of
absolute one, as we have seen, but comprised of
a compound unity, yet only one God.
 1. In Deuteronomy, the Shema of Israel
declared, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God
is one Lord.”
 - a. The word one in the Hebrew is the word
“achad” a compound unity.
 - b. There is another word in the Hebrew to
express one in the absolute sense, it is the
word “yacheed”.
 2. The most commonly and frequently used for
God in the Old Testament is “yacheed”.
 - a. The word “Acad” is used for the
compound unity to one to express the
oneness of husband and wife though they
are two, “The two shall be one flesh.”
Gen. 2:24
 - b. The word “achad” is used for the people
at the Tower of Babel is “one”, yet there
were many. Gen. 11:6
 - c. The word one “achad” is used for
Pharaoh's dreams being one. Ex. 41:25
 3. It is illustrated beautifully in the New
Testament.
 - a. Paul says the one who plants and the one
who waters are seen as one, yet are two.
1Cor. 3:6-8

- b. Paul says there are many members yet one body. 1Cor. 12:13-14
 - c. John says Jesus is one with Father and saints. Jn. 17:22-23
 - d. Paul declares that there is, “Neither Jew nor Greek, bond, free, male, female, for you are all one in Christ.” Gal. 3:28
- B.** The nature of divine unity is also evident by the plural pronouns related to God by God himself in the Old Testament.
1. In Genesis it says, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness”. Gen. 1:26
* He is not speaking to the angels for God stands distinct from angels who He created, God was not.
 2. Man has become as one of **us**. Gen. 3:22
 3. Again, “Let **us** go down”. Gen. 11:7
 4. God says, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for **us**?” Is. 6:8
 5. Isaiah says, “With who took He council?” Is. 40:13-14
- C.** The compound unity of God can also be seen in the plurality of his name Elohim.
1. The name “Elohim” is used 2570 times in the Old Testament.
 - a. The name “El” in its root means mighty one, strength.
 - b. The name “Elah” in its root signifies to swear.

- * It is similar to the Aramaic word meaning two.
 - c. The name “Elohim” is adding a plural ending and would attest to the compound unity of three.
2. Let me call your attention to a few examples in the Scriptures that record the name Elohim and that take note of the location.
 - a. In the beginning **Elohim** created.... Gen. 1:1
 - b. Hear, O Israel: The Yahweh our **Elohim** is one, a compound unity, **Adonai**. Deut. 6:4
 - 1) Jehovah or Yahweh is the covenant name of God with Moses and Israel. Ex. 3:15, 18
 - a)) The name “I am that I am” is a verb form which means, to be, being or becoming.
 - b)) The idea behind it is of being self-existence and eternal.
 - c)) Yahweh was to become whatever the need of his people might be.
 - 2) The name “Elohim” is the plurality in name with creative power.
 - 3) The word “one” is “yached” a compound unity, as opposed to an absolute one “achad”.
 - 4) The title “Adonai” means Master, ruler in authority, equivalent to Kurios in Greek.

* The Old Testament is more involved in giving emphasis on the unity of God because of the amount of paganism based on polytheism.

Illustration

Even as a man and a woman being two become one flesh, even as the church is one body, yet many members, even as you are one person, you and I are comprised of a body, soul and spirit, even so God is one, yet a compound unity of three persons.

The nature of Divine unity is throughout the Scriptures!

Conclusion

This is the first study to answer the question, “What about the Trinity as we have examined three facets of unity and the three persons of the Godhead.

- I.** The mystery of unity and the Trinity is revealed in the Scriptures!
- II.** The unity of God is throughout the Scriptures!
- III.** The nature of Divine unity is throughout the Scriptures!