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What About The Trinity? Pt. 2

In our last study we looked to the Scriptures for verifiable evidence that would attest to the mystery of unity and the Trinity in the Godhead.

1. We stated that the Trinity is beyond our ability to understand completely to its full end.
2. We stated that the mystery of unity of the Trinity on the other hand is not contrary to reason.

We also looked at the unity of God.

1. We saw the unity of oneness in the three persons of the Godhead, yet one God.
2. We saw the clear distinction of the three persons of the Godhead.

* “Hear, O Israel; the Lord God is one Lord.” Is. 6:4

Finally we saw that the scriptural evidence for the nature of divine unity based on:

1. The word used for one in relation to God that means a compound unity, not a unit of absolute one.
2. The plural pronouns that appear in the conversation of the Godhead.
3. The plural name of God.

Remember that the emphasis of the Old Testament lies on the unity of one God because of the pagan background of polytheism and despite this background, the Trinity is alluded to as we will see.

On the other hand the New Testament Scriptures are permeated with the established doctrine of the trinity as well as the unity of one God.

Having this as an established foundation we want to focus our study on “The Trinity” from three perspectives.

- I. The term to describe the three persons of the Godhead “Trinity”.
 - II. The Old Testament allusions and inferences to the doctrine of the Trinity.
 - III. The New Testament overwhelming evidence concerning the Trinity.

- I. **The term to describe the three persons of the Godhead is “Trinity”.**
 - A. No person will never find the word “Trinity” in the Old Testament or New Testament.
 1. The term comes from the Latin, “trinitios”, from the adjective “trinus” meaning three-fold or three in one.
 2. The term trinity is a theological phrase that has been used to identify and describe the doctrine revealed by God and declared through Scripture.
 3. The doctrine of the Trinity, three distinct persons in the Godhead, co-equal, co-eternal, but one God.

 - B. The first appearance of the term “Trinity” was in the Second Century.

1. The man who first used the term “Trinity” is believed to be Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch in Syria 168-183 A.D.
 - a. Two groups arose during the second century who denied the doctrine of the trinity.
 - 1) The one group is known as Monarchianism who denied the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) The other was group was known as Sabellianism, who denied the separate and distinct identities of the three persons by teaching that they were three different manifestations of God and nothing else.
 - b. Today we have similar group embracing this heresy, in Unitarianism, “Jesus Only “ or “Oneness” doctrine.
3. In the 4th Century the first council met to formulate the doctrine at Nicea in 325 A.D. where Athanasius prevailed against Arius.
 - a. Arius denied the deity of Jesus Christ, professing that he was created and exalted.
 - * This is the very doctrine of the JW’s.
 - b. It was there at Nicea that the deity of Christ was confirmed
4. The controversy continued through other councils.
 - a. At the council at Chalcedon in 351 A.D.

- b. At the council at Constantinople in 381 A.D.
 - c. There at Constantinople, the doctrine of the deity of Christ and the Trinity were formulated into what is known as the “Nicene Creed”.
5. The following example of dogma is found in the Athanasian Creed, formulated during the fifth century.
 - * “We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity. Neither confounding the persons, nor separating the substance. For the person of the Father is one, of the Son another, and of the Holy Ghost another. But of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost there is one divinity, equal glory and co-eternal majesty. What the Father is, the same is the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father is immense, the Son immense, the Holy Ghost immense. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternal, but one eternal. So there are not three (beings) uncreated, nor three immense but one uncreated, and one immense. In like manner the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, the Holy Ghost is Omnipotent. And yet there are not three

omnipotents, but one omnipotent. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord. Because we are thus compelled by Christian verity to confess each person severally to be God and Lord; so we are prohibited from saying that there are three Gods or Lords. The Father was made form none, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. Therefore there is one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this trinity there is nothing first or last; nothing greater or less. But all three coeternal persons are coequal among themselves; so that through all, as is above said, both unity in trinity, and trinity in unity, is to be worshipped.”

Illustration

The Augsburg confession of 1530 which is the early Lutheran confession expresses full agreement with “the decree of the Nicene Synod concerning the unity of the divine essence and of the three persons...: to wit, that there is one divine essence which is called and is God...; same essence and power, who are also coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” (Contemporary Wesleyan Theology:393)

This is the term used to describe the three persons of the Godhead “Trinity”!

II. The Old Testament allusions and inferences to the doctrine of the Trinity.

- A.** The First person of the Trinity the Father is attested to throughout the Old Testament.
- 1.** When we studied of the doctrine of God, we looked at the “The Existence Of God”
 - a.** We discussed the existence of God Denied.
 - b.** We saw the existence of God affirmed.
 - c.** We noted the existence of God confirmed.
 - 2.** The evidence of the Scriptures is unmistakable.
 - a.** Isaiah’s cry is, “I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God **besides** Me.” Is. 45:5
 - b.** Isaiah again declares, “You, O Lord, are our Father; our Redeemer; from Everlasting is Your name. Is. 63:16
 - c.** Malachi says, “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Mal. 2:10
- B.** The Son Jesus Christ is best seen in the Old Testament in the Angel of the Lord.
- 1.** This is called a Christophany which is distinct from other appearances of God called theophanies.

- * These are visible manifestation of God to give evidence of his presence such as the cloud, the pillar of fire, etc.
- 2. Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, Hagar, “I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude”. Gen. 16:10
* Hagar called the Angel of the Lord LORD and God. Gen. 16:13
- 3. Three angels appeared to Abraham as he sat at his tent door and one of them was identified as the LORD. Gen. 18:1, 13
 - a. The context is the announcement of Isaac’s birth and Sarah’s response of laughter.
 - b. Verse 25 Abraham called Him the judge of all the earth.
- 4. The Angel is called Yaweh-jireh, Yaweh will provide and He swears by Himself to bless Abraham for his obedience to offer his son. Gen. 22:11, 14, 15-16
- 5. The Angel of God spoke to Jacob in a dream and identified Himself to Jacob as the God of Bethel. Gen. 31:11-13
* The place where Jacob had anointed the pillar and made his vow to God of giving Him a tenth of all.
- 6. God told Moses that He would send His Angel before him, having power to pardon and God’s name was in Him. Ex. 23:20-21

- 7. The Angel of the LORD appears as the Commander of the LORD’s army and tells Joshua to take his shoes off, for the place where he stood as holy and then He receives worship from Joshua as he placed his face to the ground. Joshua 5:13-15
- 8. The Angel of God said to Gideon, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” Gideon did so and the Angel of God receives the offering and Gideon built an altar calling it “the Lord our peace”. Judges 6:20, 24
- 9. Keep in mind what the Scriptures reveal about the nature of angels, they are created beings by God.
 - a. No angel has ever received and accepted worship for twice John is told by the angel to worship God, not him. Rev. 19:10,22:9
 - b. The Angel of the LORD is identified as God.
 - c. The Angel of the LORD is recognized as God.
 - d. The Angel of the LORD calls Himself God.
 - e. The angel of the LORD receives worship as God.
 - f. The angel of the LORD is distinct from God the Father.
 - g. The angel of the LORD has attributes of deity.

- 1) The ultimate theophany being Christ Himself in the incarnation to reveal the Father. Jn. 1:18.
- 2) He is called the captain of our salvation. Heb. 2:10

C. The Holy Spirit is also throughout the Old Testament as a distinct and a separate person of the Godhead.

1. The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Gen. 1:2
* Revealing the creative power of the third person of the Trinity.
2. My Spirit shall not always strive with man forever...Gen. 6:3
3. The Spirit of God abode in specific individuals such as Moses, Joshua, David, Gideon, etc.
4. David says, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue." 2Sam. 23:2
5. Isaiah quoted by Luke say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives.... Is. 61:1, Lk. 4:18
6. Zechariah proclaimed, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.." Zech. 4:6

7. In the book of Numbers there is an alludes to the trinity in the doxology. Num. 6:24-26
* "The **LORD** bless you and keep you; The **LORD** make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The **LORD** lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."
8. Equally is Isaiah's cry of holy, holy, holy alludes to the trinity. Is. 6:3

Illustration

The Formula of Concorod of 1576 is the late Lutheran confession expresses full agreement with all three of the ancient Christian creeds, which provide the official developments of the Trinitarian doctrine all the way through the rather late Athenasian Creed. "Of ... the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds," it states: "We publicly confess that we embrace them, and reject all heresies and all dogmas which ever have been brought into the Church of God contrary to their decision." (Contemporary Wesleyan Theology:393)

These are the Old Testament's allusions and inferences to the doctrine of the Trinity!

III. The New Testament's overwhelming evidence concerning the Trinity.

- * What is concealed in the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament!

- A. At the birth of Jesus all three persons are distinguished. Lk. 1:35
1. The Holy Spirit will come upon you.
 2. The power of the Highest will overshadow you.
 3. The Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.
 - * You shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us, in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures. Gen. 3:15; Is. 7:14; 9:6-7; Matt. 1:23
- B. At the baptism of Christ we have all three persons. Matt. 3:16-17
1. The Son Jesus was in the water.
 2. The Spirit of God descending like a dove on the Son.
 3. The voice of the Father from heaven is heard about the Son.
- C. The baptismal formula in Matthew encompasses the Trinity. Matt. 28:19
1. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.
 - a. The name is singular.
 - b. Then what proceeds to name the three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. God said that His name was in the Angel of the LORD who was the pre-incarnations of Jesus. Ex. 23:21
 - a. Jesus continually said “I Am”, Jehovah or Yahweh said, “I Am that I Am”, the becoming one. Ex. 3:14; Jn. 8:12; 8:58; 9:5; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6
 - b. The name of Joshua in Hebrew is the contraction of Yahweh-shua which means Jehovah is salvation and Jesus in the Greek is the translation of Joshua from the Hebrew, therefore the **name Jesus means Yahweh is salvation.**
 3. Jesus said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in **My name**, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” Jn. 14:26
 4. And the Holy Spirit doesn’t speak of Himself, but of Christ. Jn. 16:13
- D. Jesus bears testimony to the Trinity in John
1. And **I** will pray the **Father**, and he shall give you another **comforter** Jn 14:16
 2. **The Comforter** is the Holy Ghost. Jn. 14:26
 3. **The Father** will send in **my name**. Jn. 15:26
- E. Paul’s benediction to the Corinthians names the three persons of the Trinity.
1. In the First letter. 1Cor. 12:4-6
 - a. The same **Spirit**.

- b. The same **Lord**.
 - c. The same **God**.
 - 2. In the Second letter. 2Cor. 13:14
 - a. The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**.
 - b. The love of **God**.
 - c. The communion of the **Holy Spirit**.
- F.** The Pauline epistles many of them open with greeting and salutations from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. But they invariably close the epistle just with the mention of Jesus Christ. Rom., 1Cor., Gal., Eph., Phil., 1Thess., 2Thess., 1-2Tim., Philemon, Col., Titus
- G.** All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in the following epistles.
- 1. Eph. 2:18; 3:2-5, 14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20
 - 2. 1Thess. 1:2-5; 2Thess. 2:13-14
 - 3. 2Tim. 1:3,13-14; Tit. 3:4-6,
 - 4. Heb. 2:3-4; 6:4-6; 9:14; 10:29-31
 - 5. 1Pet. 1:2; 2:5; 4:14
 - 6. Rev. 1:4-6
- H.** Jude also makes reference to the Trinity. Jude 20-21
- 1. He says, “Praying in the **Holy Spirit**”.
 - 2. He says, “Keep yourselves in the love of **God**”.
 - 3. He says, “Looking for the mercy of our Lord **Jesus Christ** unto eternal life”.

- I.** The evidence for the Trinity as well as the doctrine throughout scripture is without question.
- 1. The Trinity is God’s revelation of the Godhead to man.
 - 2. The Trinity is beyond man’s ability to comprehend fully by our intellect or logic.
 - 3. The reason is that God is infinite and man is finite.
 - 4. The fact is that God is at the same time transcendent and eminent.
 - 5. Let me leave you with three scriptures that not only give evidence to the Trinity but their interaction and involvement in the life of the believer.
 - a. “And because you are sons, **God** has sent forth the **Spirit** of **His Son** into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Gal. 4:6
 - b. “For through **Him** we both have access by **one Spirit** to the **Father**”. Eph. 2:18
 - c. Elect according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, in sanctification of the **Spirit**, for obedience and sprinkling of the **blood of Jesus Christ**: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. 1Pet. 1:2

Illustration

The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 declares, “In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God

the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son". (Contemporary Wesleyan Theology:393)

This is the New Testament's overwhelming evidence concerning the Trinity!

Conclusion

Remember "The Trinity" from these three perspectives.

- I.** By the term "Trinity" that describes the three persons of the Godhead!
- II.** By the Old Testament allusions and inferences to the doctrine of the Trinity!
- III.** By the New Testament overwhelming evidence concerning the Trinity!