



This article is not meant to be an exhaustive study on the Godhead, but rather encourage you to delve into it in more detail for yourself, and to explore how traditionally held beliefs line up with biblical truth.

## The Godhead

### Exploring Historic Origins

The doctrine of the Trinity is among the most recognized teachings in Christendom. But oddly, rather than being deeply understood as you might expect, it is mostly taken for granted to be true and can often be addressed by teachers with a "do not question" attitude. But what we'd like to do is brush the dust off the Bibles ourselves and take a closer look at this teaching through the lens of the scriptures.

Interestingly, the Trinity doctrine is not taught explicitly anywhere in scripture - either the Old or New Testament. In fact, this doctrine was not formally introduced until the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. - a politically motivated meeting, convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine. A rift over the Godhead had begun to gather momentum, and had become significant enough that the emperor called for this assembly of bishops. As a side note, it was in a future council, similar to this one (The Third Ecumenical Council, 431 A.D.), that Mary veneration or worship was sanctioned and affirmed. The Trinity was positioned as a doctrine not to be understood, but rather to be believed in pure, simple, childlike faith. But a person looking to uncover truth today should not rest on the precepts of men, but rather weigh everything against the word of God as revealed in the Bible. We are not to build our teachings on the foundation of these councils, but rather "on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone." (Eph 2:20).

Remember that hundreds of years earlier, in the infancy of the church, the apostle Paul gave several warnings throughout his epistles about the onset of false teachings that would creep steadily into the church. In fact, many of his writings and those of Peter and Jude, address false teachers who were abounding very early on. In Acts 20, Paul says prophetically to the elders in Ephesus:

**"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!"** (V 29-31).

It is important to note that various creeds and doctrines were established centuries after the early church went off the scene, and political intrigue, greed, power and manipulation became commonplace. For example, the concept of Purgatory pretty much a 'finishing school' for the dead who are not deemed ready for heaven yet, is completely the creation of medieval imagination, used as a tool to enlarge the control and coffers of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church,

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where many of these teachings originate, is built upon many such creeds which have been elevated above the scriptures. To make matters worse, for several centuries reading of the Bible by anyone other than clergy was virtually banned, ensuring that key teachings would never be questioned. Even church services were conducted in a language that the common man could not understand. It was the Dark Ages indeed. Of course, the truth was never completely shrouded, though dissenters were quickly rooted out and destroyed.

Some relief came just before, during and after the time of the Reformation when the teachings and authority of the Catholic Church were questioned, and many truths were restored, but some ancient creeds and doctrines remain foundational for many of today's churches and denominations. One of these is the Trinity.

Isn't it striking that one of the 'pillars of Christianity' didn't come into existence until 300 years after the death and resurrection of Christ? On this point alone, it is curious that we are encouraged not to question the doctrine. In the catechism of the Catholic Church, it is referred to as the "mystery of the most Holy Trinity." Here is a quote from the catechism itself:

*"The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the **most fundamental and essential teaching** in the 'hierarchy of the truths of faith.'" (Catechism, 234)*

We will see shortly whether or not this "most fundamental" teaching has its roots and foundation in the scriptures. In our day, the World Council of Churches is insisting that all churches and religions that are members of the Council should advocate the belief that there is one God, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit." That is, that there are three persons in one God.

But is it true? And if not, what are the implications? As the "most fundamental and essential teaching" in Christendom, surely it is worth a closer look.

Even in the Catholic Church, questions have arisen around this teaching. In The New Catholic Encyclopedia we find this:

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"From what has been seen thus far, the impression could arise that the Trinitarian dogma is in the last analysis a late 4th-century invention. The formulation 'one God in three persons' was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the fourth century. But it is precisely this formulation that has first claim to the title the Trinitarian dogma. Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective."

### **Triads & Trinities in Paganism**

The concept of a triad or a trinity of gods was one of the earliest inventions of pagan religions. This fact alone doesn't automatically mean that the Trinity teaching common in



Christendom is false, but does raise some questions when all the evidence is considered together.

The worship of pagan gods grouped into threes, or triads was fairly common throughout paganism, prevalent in Egypt, Greece, Rome and other cultures in the centuries before, during and after Christ. For instance, there is the Greek triad of Zeus, Athena, and Apollo (said by adherents 'to agree in one') or the Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva (the "[Trimurti](#)" or the "Great Trinity"). Although many of these religions had many minor deities, they distinctly acknowledged that there were superior gods who consisted of three persons in essence. For example, the Babylonians used an equilateral triangle to represent their concept of this three-in-one god. Is it possible that pagan concepts had some influence in the formation of this doctrine, just as Mary worship or defining December 25th as day of Jesus' birth, were simply pagan ideas overlaid with a veneer of Christianity?

As the secular historian William Durant observed, "Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it..."

It should be pointed out that the translators of the Bible were so eager to solidify their belief in the Trinity that we come to a scripture like 1 John 5:7 which reads as follows in the King James Version: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." This is a completely false rendering of the text, but has been sincerely used over the centuries to prove that the Trinity is biblical in its foundation. But it should read: "For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement." If this were a simple slip or an error, it could be excused, but this is an intentional misrepresentation that raises questions about the motives of the translators.

This is why it is so important to not simply ingest whatever is presented to us, but to diligently seek the truth as it is delivered in God's word, as His Holy Spirit directs us. Look what Luke records of a group of people who did not swallow everything taught to them: "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11).

### **A Curious Omission**

Here's a revealing experiment you can do right now before reading further. **Pick any epistle you like: authored by Paul, James, Peter, John or Jude.** Notice that each of them has an opening greeting toward the church. If indeed the Holy Spirit was regarded by them as a person, a member of the Trinity, is it not odd that the Holy Spirit does not appear in even one of the opening remarks? Again, we welcome you to examine this for yourself. The reader is greeted in the name of the Father and the Son, but why is the Holy Spirit not mentioned? In his letter to the Ephesians, for example, Paul opens in the 2nd and 3rd verses: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the

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God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ..."

If this just occurred once or was simply the style of just one of the authors, it might be overlooked. But the startling consistency of this greeting throughout every single epistle cannot just be swept under the rug, even by the staunchest Trinitarian. **Why, if the Holy Spirit, is a person of the Godhead, would 'he' not be included in the introduction when all the writers were careful to acknowledge the Father and Jesus Christ in their very first words?** This gives us a clear understanding as to how the apostles viewed the Godhead.

And then look at how Paul describes the following order: "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Cor 11:3). Again, why would the Holy Spirit not be included in this hierarchy? There is no evidence that the apostles of Jesus ever heard of a Trinity.

Or when the Kingdom of the Lord is finally established on the earth, why is the Holy Spirit not mentioned in the following? "I did not see a temple in the city, because **the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple**. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." (Rev 21:22-23). I have heard people who are so entrenched in the Trinity try to explain these scriptures away without conviction. When we are threatened with the truth, we have a tendency to turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the evidence before us.

### **The Truth of the Godhead**

"Are you saying that there is no such thing as the Holy Spirit? That's heresy!!" No, that is not we are advocating at all. Indeed, we believe in the power, baptism and presence of the Holy Spirit. We covet the gifts of the Spirit and the deep inner workings that come with yielding more of our lives to God. But the Holy Spirit is not a person - it is the Spirit of God. It is what makes the Father and Son one. It is what Christ promises to us as His people. That's what the early church understood and taught: that there are two separate entities in the Godhead - the Father and his begotten Son.

Those who hold to the position of the Trinity hold to the position that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons being distinct from each other; three Gods - but yet only one God. The scriptures do not bear this out, as we have seen and shall see.

Going back to 1 Corinthians 11, we see the order that flows from God to the woman. All would acknowledge that Paul would have clearly understood the Godhead. When we line things up, we see the woman with her head - the man. We see the man with his head - Christ. We see Christ with his head - God. God the head of Christ, Christ the head of man, man the head of the woman. If the Holy Spirit was a person, why was he left out? This is the simplest explanation for the Godhead we have ever found.

There are really just two entities in the Godhead - the Father and the Son. **The Son is subject, not equal to, the Father and will be throughout eternity.** The Holy Spirit



is the invisible active force of the Almighty God which moves his children to respond to his will.

Some may argue that we know the Holy Spirit is a person because Jesus said: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13). But there is no more logic in calling the Holy Spirit a person than there is in calling 'Wisdom' a person. After all, Proverbs 9:1 tells us that "Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars." Does that mean wisdom is a person - namely a woman? No. It is a figure of speech. The "Spirit of truth" - he - and Wisdom - she - are merely figures of speech and do not denote personages. In John 16, the Counselor or Holy Spirit is referred to as

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'he', but like wisdom, that does not automatically convey personage. Again, the early church clearly understood this.

In fact, look what Jesus says in John 15: "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth **who goes out from the Father**, he will testify about me." (v 26). The Spirit comes from the Father or "goes out from the Father". It's not a separate entity at all.

In Romans 8, Paul writes this: "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but **by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you**. And if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Christ..." (v 9). Notice the Spirit is really the "Spirit of God" and the "Spirit of Christ". He then continues, "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (v 11). Notice the two references to "his Spirit"? That's God's Spirit, not a separate personage or entity. There is power and authority in the Spirit of God and it is the unifying ingredient that enables us to have fellowship with our Father through Christ.

It is imperative that children of the Lord know who they are serving, worshiping and praying to. It is sad commentary on the part of many that they really do not know who or what they are worshiping. That's not what God intended. And that is really the purpose of this writing: that you might know what you worship, rather than falling in line with the traditions of men.

At this point, you may be asking about the Great Commission in which Jesus stated: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt 28:19-20). We must not read this scripture in isolation and ignore everything else the Bible has to say on this issue. In the case of this scripture, it is balanced by the rest of the New Testament, wherein not a single baptism was ever conducted in that way. Instead, you will find that all recorded baptisms in scripture were routinely done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (for example, Acts

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2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5). **Thus, we face two possibilities:** either the disciples were disobeying a direct command from Jesus himself, or they had a correct understanding of what Jesus meant. We must balance the scriptures and not attempt to build a doctrine - and such a foundational one at that - without consistent biblical support.

In closing, it is important to revisit the point that we should not feel threatened by the truth. Truth is liberating and stabilizing. Having the humility to consider truth rather than its outright rejection is a mark of maturity and a hungry heart. If nothing else, hopefully this writing has encouraged you to look more deeply into this teaching and others, to ensure that your faith is built on biblical foundations and not the traditions of men. Like the saints in Berea, we must look more closely and prayerfully into the word of God, asking Him to reveal truth to us not so that we might acquire head-knowledge, but so that we may build our lives on a foundation of truth, walk in light and teach others faithfully.