

Our Glorious God – The Holy Trinity

Introduction: Current state – there exists a blending of various types and flavors of faiths. There is much stress on love, harmony, unity – at the expense of TRUTH and true BIBLICAL DOCTRINE. This short document about GOD will form a foundation for the proper understanding of much of the **Gospel of John**.

Motivation to study GOD:

Jeremiah 9:23-24; Jer 9:23 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

II Peter 1:2 2Pe 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

Statements of this doctrine: (The Word: **Trias** – Theophilus A.D.181;
Trinitas – Tertullian A.D. 220)



ONE GOD – (Deut. 6:4; 4:35, 39; I Kings 8:60;) N.T. Mark 12:29-32; John 17:3; I Cor 8:4-6; I Tim 2:5) (unique) Isaiah 45: 22, Ex. 15:11; Zech. 14:9

TRINITY - The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian faith — the truth that in the UNITY of the Godhead there are Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. While these Three Persons

being truly distinct one from another they are of the SAME ESSENCE
(Substance).

UNITY of God – There is but ONE God and the Divine Nature (ESSENCE) is undivided and indivisible.

Our hymn: “Holy God we praise Thee”

Holy Father, Holy Son,
Holy Spirit, Three we name Thee;
While in **Essence only One**,
Undivided God we claim Thee;
And adoring bend the knee,
While we own the mystery

THREE PERSONS, each possessing full and equal deity, are presented.
as **ONE GOD**. Stress on unity and diversity within God. He is seen as **ONE IN THREE AND AS THREE IN ONE**.

A fifth century theologian said, "In no other subject is error more dangerous or inquiry more laborious, or discovery of the truth more profitable." Truly, herein lies the greatest mystery of all revealed truth.

The Doctrine comes from **direct revelation, and from INDUCTIVE Study of the Bible**.

It is Basic doctrine of the **Historic Biblical Christian Faith**.

It is the “**Orthodox**” belief since the early days of the church fathers rejected heresies. Four church councils Nicea 325, Constantinople 382, Ephesus, 431, Chalcedon 451 affirmed these eternal truths.

Development of the **Athanasian Creed (450 A.D.)**, (Statement of Faith)

“We worship one GOD in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the Substance. For the Father’s person is one, the Son’s person is one, and the Holy Spirit’s another; but the GODHEAD of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one. Their glory is equal, their majesty coeternal.”

Hymnals This belief is reflected in our precious **hymnals** “Come Now Our Mighty King,” “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Human limitations Our ability to grasp some theological concepts are limited. (Is 55:8, Ro 11:33). It demands human Humility

Mystery Do not go beyond what the Bible states. This doctrine is a GREAT MYSTERY. It may appear as an intellectual puzzle, or even as a contradiction.

Christianity is **MONOTHEISTIC**, not tri-theistic, not poly theistic. One God, not three. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God. Each exists as a separate person with individual functions within the Godhead.

Scriptural support for the Divinity of each Person in the Godhead.

The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

- A. **The Father is God** (I Peter 1:2; John 6:27, 20:17; Galatians 1:1; Matthew 11:25; Jude 1).
- B. **The Son -- or Word -- is God** (John 1:1, 8:58, 20:28; Hebrews 1:8, .Colossians 2:9, Titus 2:13).
- C. **The Holy Spirit is God** (Acts 5 :1-11;I Cor. 6:19-20).

Scriptural support for the PERSONHOOD of each Person in the Godhead.

The Father is a Person, the Son is a Person, and the Holy Spirit is a Person. Personhood is defined as having Intellect (mind), Volition (will), and Emotion, with which to interact with others.

- A. **The Father is a Person.** We can have fellowship with him, 1 John 1:3; he knows, Matthew 6:6-8; he teaches, Matthew 16:17; he loves, John 16:27; he is a witness, John 8:18; he has a will, John 5:30.
- B. **The Son is a Person.** We can have fellowship with him, 1 John 1:3; he knows, Matthew 11:27; he teaches, John 1:18, Rev. 2:18; he loves, Romans 8:35, Gal. 2:20; he is a witness, John 8:18; he has a will, John 5:30; he can be grieved, John 11:35.
- C. **The Holy Spirit is a Person.** We can have fellowship with him, Philippians 2:1, II Cor. 13:14; he knows, I Cor. 2:11; he teaches, Luke 12:12, I Cor. 2:13; he loves, Romans 15:30; he is a witness, Acts 20:23, Romans 8:16; he has a will, I Cor. 12:11; he can be grieved, Ephesians 4:30.

Scriptural support for the Distinctiveness of each Person in the Godhead.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are personally distinct from one another.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are able to:

- A. **Send or be sent by one another** (John 3:17, 10:36, 14:23-26, 15:26, 16:7).
- B. **Speak to each other** (John 17:1-26, Romans 8:26-27, Hebrews 1:7-8) and about each other (Matthew 17:5, Mark 1:11, John 8:13-18).
- C. **The Father and Son love and honor each other** (John 3:35, 5:20, 14:31).

The Trinity doctrine -- that there is one God in three Persons -- summarizes these biblical truths without adding or subtracting anything from them.

It is especially useful to compare various doctrines that claim biblical support. The first is the concept of letting Scripture interpret Scripture. The second is the concept that the Bible is a progressive revelation, laying the foundation and then building on it; and many points that are left unclear while the foundation is being laid are made clear later on. The third is that it is far wiser to interpret that which is unclear in the light of that which is clear rather than vice-versa.

The Nature of God (Godhead): Essence & Attributes

(Source: Systematic Theology)

Essence (Substance) That which underlies all outward manifestations. The "Reality" itself whether material or immaterial		Attributes Qualities that inhere in the substance and constitute an analytical & closer description of it.	
Spirituality	Immaterial/Incorporeal	Non-Moral Attributes. (Incommunicable)	Omnipresence Omniscience Omnipotence
Invisible	No man has seen God		
Self-Existence	" I AM" He is alive		
Immensity	Psalm 139 (Omnipresence)	Moral Attributes (Communicable)	Holiness
Eternality	Timeless, succession less realm.		Righteousness
Unity of God	Indivisible		Justice
Immutability	Does not change		WRATH
			Truth
			Goodness
			Love
			Benevolence
			Mercy
			Grace

Essence of God Christian writers described the God of the Bible as of one essence or substance and existing in three (subsistences) or persons.

Spirituality of God

He is immaterial in corporeal (John 4:24)—cmds. no images (Lu. 24:39). Man has a finite spirit, which dwells in a material body. Hands and feet and eyes?? Anthropomorphic and symbolic representations to more easily communicate with man.

He is invisible

Col 1:15; Jn 1:18; Ro 1:20; I Tim 1:17 (Someday we will see Him, Rev 22:4)
BUT men saw God ??? (Ge. 32:30; Ex 3:6; 24:9f; Nu. 12:6-8; Is 6:1). Look into a mirror. Do you see yourself? NO, only a reflection of yourself. Men saw a “reflection” of God’s glory but they did not see the “ESSENCE” of God.

Theophanies are manifestations of deity in visible forms (Ge. 16:7-14)

He is alive

Joshua 3:10; Matthew 16:16, I Tim 3:15 – life implies feeling, power, activity. Ps 36:9; He sees, hears, answers prayers, loves, hates sin (Deut 16:22).

He is a Person

Human spirit is personal. Therefore, The Divine Spirit must be personal, can’t be a lower order than the creature. (In His Image).

Self-consciousness (Ex 3:14; Is 45:5) He is a Being Who can say I, and ME and can respond to someone who says to Him “YOU.” Self determination. Scripture represents God as having psychological characteristics of personality: intellect, sensibility, volition (will), speaking, hearing, seeing, grieving, anger, jealous, compassion.

There is also self-consciousness and self determination in each of the three persons in the trinity.

Self Existence of God

Man’s ground of existence is outside of himself., God’s existence is not dependent on anything outside of Himself. A theologian said:”He is the first Cause, Himself uncaused.” The Uncaused Cause. He exists by necessity of His nature. It is NOT correct to say that God is His own cause, for then He would have the power to annihilate himself. I AM THAT I AM. Self existing. Being, not becoming. (John 8:58; Exodus 3:14)

Immensity

God is infinite in relation to space. He is not limited by space. Instead, all space depends upon Him. (I Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7; IS 66:1; Acts 17:24-28). This is a difficult subject to apprehend. God is both **Immanent** and **Transcendent**.

Eternity

God is infinite in relation to time. No beginning and no end. He is free from all successions of time. He is the cause of time. Heb.1:2; 11:13; Gen. 21:33; Ps. 90:1-2; Ps. 102:27; I tim. 6:16. Shedd writes “has simultaneous possession of his total duration.... The whole of the Divine knowledge and experience is ever before the Divine being. So that there are not parts succeeding parts. Eternity for God is one now eternal present. He possesses the whole of His existence in one individual present. In Scripture this is referred to as “The day of Eternity.” (II Pet 3:18; and today Ps 2:7; II Pet 3:8.) But do not suppose that time has no objective reality for God. But, rather He sees the past and the future as vividly as he sees the present. Ex. A parade procession from the top of a building. In Is 9:6 “Father of Eternity” Both time and space came to being through Him. (John 1:3)
Time will one day merge into eternity (I Cor. 15:28) Shedd thinks, that for the creature time will not be succession less existence, every **finite mind** must think feel and act in time.

Immutability (unchanging in HIS essential essence and attributes. (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8)

Attributes of God

These are the qualities that inhere in the essence, and constitute a closer description of the essence. They are objective and real, not merely man’s subjective mode of perceiving God. There are various manners in which theologians categorize God’s attributes. We will list the Moral and Non-Moral attributes.

Non-Moral attributes

Omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10; Is. 66:1) He sees all, and is available to help
Omniscience – Inf. in knowledge (Ps. 139:1-10; Pr. 15:3; Jer. 23:23-25)
Omnipotence – All powerful, (Ge. 17:1; Job 42:2; Rev 4:8). Absolute
Power – Absolute power - no secondary causes. Ordinate power –
providential secondary causes.
Immutability – unchanging in His essence, attributes, consciousness, will.
Neither improvement or deteriorations are possible. Mal 3:6; James 1:17;
He. 13:8. This is not to be confused with immobility. God changes his
dealing with changing man, in order to remain unchangeable in his
character and purpose.

Moral Attributes

Holiness – absolutely separate and exalted from his creatures. The perfection of all that he is. Purity of BEING is before purity of willing and doing. Lev 11:44; I Peter 1:16; Rev 4:8; Is 6:3) We must approach him with reverence and awe. (He 12:28)
Righteousness / Justice – this is seen in his treatment of His creatures. God can not make a law, establish a penalty and then not follow through if the law is disobeyed. (EZ 18:20) When the law is violated the penalty

MUST be meted out, either personally or vicariously. The R+ is revealed in this punishment. The chief end of punishment is for the maintenance of JUSTICE. Man can trust God's R+ and Justice.

Goodness -

Love – A voluntary affection. (I Jn 4:8b, Jn 3:16)

Benevolence – bountifully, tenderly, kindly treatment of his (Mat 5:45) creatures.

Mercy – Compassion, pity, lovingkindness. (Eph. 2:4) Exercise of Mercy is optional. He does not have to. Withholding judgment.

Grace –God's goodness manifested toward the ill-deserving Eph 1:6) The exercise of Grace is optional.

Truth – God is Truth.. Foundation of all knowledge. (Jn 17:3) Ultimate reality and TRUTH is GOD. His faithfulness to his own truth is the assurance of is promises.

Old Testament.

Hints of the Trinity but God's **UNITY** is stressed. The revelation is much clearer and more complete in the New Testament. We need the teaching from both testaments for the full picture.

Plurality Implied. Elohim, is used of him many times in the Old Testament (Ge.1:1; Deut. 6:4). The **plural personal** pronouns (**US**) are also used of God (Gen. 1:26; Isa. 6:8).

Clearly, Jehovah-God is distinguished. The "Lord" and "his anointed" are two separate persons in Psalm 2:2, 6,7. The fact that the Holy Spirit is spoken of as distinct from the Father and the Son and yet just as truly God argues for a plurality in the Godhead as well Job 26:13).

Trinity Implied.

Three separate persons are implied in Isaiah's vision of the angelic response, "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa. 6:3). This seems to be more than the customary Hebrew mode of emphasis, especially since the plural "us" is in the immediate context. It seems clear enough that the Father is the one addressed. When John 12:40-41 is studied along with Isaiah 6:10, it becomes apparent that the Son's glory was beheld by the prophet. Also, Acts 28:25-26 and Isaiah 6:9, when taken together, provide further evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the passage.

Even clearer presentations of three persons in the Godhead are to be seen in Isaiah 48:16 and 63:7-10. Three distinct persons are in the passages. The pre incarnate Christ speaks (48:16), and the Lord, the angel of his presence, and the Holy Spirit are specifically mentioned (63:7-10).