

## THE TRINITY

### I. Origin of Term<sup>1</sup>

"Smeaton states, 'Theophilus of Antioch about 175 A.D., speaks of a Triad in the Godhead.' To Tertullian (160-220) we are indebted for the first use of the word Trinity to describe the Godhead."<sup>2</sup>

### II. The Trinity in the Old Testament

#### A. Plural references to God

1. The name Elohim employs a plural ending (cf. *seraphim, cherubim*).<sup>3</sup>
2. "Us." Gen. 1:26; Gen. 3:22; Gen. 11:7; I sa. 6:8
3. The *shema* - use of the compound one (echad).  
"The famous shema (Deu. 6:4), the most fundamental saying about God for a Jew, declares, 'Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah.' Far from declaring that the God of the Bible is a singular being, the Hebrew word translated 'one' is echad, which means a unity of several becoming one, as when God said the man and woman became 'one [echad] flesh' (Gen. 2:24); when many soldiers became 'one [echad] troop' (2S. 2:25) or when two sticks became 'one [echad] stick' (Eze. 37:17)."<sup>4</sup>

#### B. The Father and Son

1. Conversation between the Father and Son. Ps. 2:3,7
2. The LORD speaks to David's Lord. Ps. 110:1
3. A riddle concerning the Son. Pr. 30:4
4. Triune cry of the Seraphim (and living creatures). I sa. 6:3 (Rev. 4:8)
5. A Son to be born, but named *Mighty God, and Everlasting Father*. I sa. 7:14; 9:6
6. The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days. Dan. 7:13

#### C. The Father, Son, and Spirit

1. The Father and the Spirit send the Son. I sa. 48:16
2. The Father, the Angel of His presence (face, countenance), and the Holy Spirit. I sa. 63:9-10

### III. The Trinity in the New Testament

#### A. Father, Son, and Spirit.

1. Baptism of Jesus. Matt. 3:16
2. Trinitarian formula. Mtt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5
3. The annunciation. Luke 1:31-35
4. The promised Helper. John 14:16
5. Three that bear witness. 1 John 5:7<sup>5</sup>

#### B. Father and Son

1. Mystery of God includes both Father and Son, Col. 2:2

#### IV. Actions by the Trinity

- A. The atonement of Christ. I sa. 53:6; I sa. 53:10; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:14
- B. Creation. Gen. 1:1-2; Job 26:13; Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30; I sa. 42:5; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3
- C. The incarnation. Luke 1:35; Php. 2:7; Heb. 10:5
- D. The resurrection.<sup>6</sup> John 2:19; John 10:17; Acts 4:10; Rom. 4:24; Rom. 6:4; Rom. 8:11; 1Pe. 3:18
- E. Regeneration of the Spiritually dead. John 5:21; Tit. 3:5; Jas. 1:17-18

#### V. Roles within the Godhead

- A. Jesus petitions the Father to send the Spirit Who then testifies of Jesus. John 14:16; John 15:26; John 16:7; John 16:13
- B. Father sends the Spirit in the name of Jesus. John 14:26
- C. Jesus does the will of the Father : Mtt. 4:3; Mtt. 6:10; Mtt. 26:39; Luke 4:3; Luke 11:2; Luke 22:42; John 4:34; John 5:19; John 5:30; John 6:38; John 8:28; John 10:18; John 12:49-50; Heb. 10:7-9
- D. All things under Jesus' feet Who then is subject to the Father. 1 Cor. 15:28
- E. As in marriage, the persons of the Trinity are equal, but differ in role.

#### VI. Deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit

Those who are unwilling to accept the doctrine of the Trinity must ignore the following passages which overwhelmingly establish both Jesus and the Holy Spirit as God.

- A. **Jesus called Jehovah** : Ps. 68:18 (cf. Eph. 4:8-10); Ps. 102:12 (cf. Heb. 1:10-12); Ps. 102:25-27 (cf. Heb. 1:10-12); I sa. 6:5 (cf. John 12:41); Jer. 23:5-6 (cf. 1Cor. 1:30); Zec. 12:10 (cf. Rev. 1:7); John 12:41 (cf. I sa. 6:5); 1Cor. 1:30 (cf. Jer. 23:5-6); Eph. 4:8-10 (cf. Ps. 68:18); Heb. 1:10-12 (cf. Ps. 102:12,25-27)
- B. **Jesus creator** : John 1:3; John 1:10; Acts 3:15; Col. 1:16; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 3:14
- C. **Jesus does divine works** : Mtt. 9:2; Mtt. 23:34 (sends prophets); Mtt. 23:37 (wooded Jerusalem); Mark 2:5; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:20-21; Luke 7:48; John 2:19 (cf. Acts 3:15); Heb. 1:2; 2Ti. 1:10; Acts 3:15 (cf. John 2:19)
- D. **Jesus equal with God** : Num. 21:6 (cf. 1Cor. 10:9); I sa. 49:10 (cf. Rev. 7:17); Luke 1:76; Luke 22:69; John 1:1; John 5:18; John 5:23; John 8:58; John 10:30; John 10:33; John 10:38; John 12:45; John 14:1; John 14:9; John 19:7; Rom. 9:5; 1Cor. 10:9 (cf. Num. 21:6); Php. 1:19; Php. 2:6; Col. 2:2; Rev. 7:17 (cf. I sa. 49:10)
- E. **Jesus eternal** : Ps. 110:1; I sa. 9:6; I sa. 48:16; Dan. 3:25; Mic. 5:2; Mtt. 22:44; John 1:1; John 1:15; John 1:30; John 3:13; John 8:58; John 17:5; John 17:24; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:8-10; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 13:8; Rev. 1:8; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 19:15; Rev. 22:13
- F. **Jesus fullness of God** : Col. 1:19; Col. 2:9-19; Heb. 1:3; 1Ti. 6:16
- G. **Jesus omnipresent**<sup>7</sup> : John 1:48; John 3:13; John 14:18; John 14:20; John 14:23
- H. **Jesus omniscient** : John 1:48; John 4:17; John 6:64; John 11:14; John 13:11; John 18:4; Rev. 2:23

- I. **Jesus worshiped** : Ex. 3:5; Jos. 5:15; Mtt. 2:2; Mtt. 8:2; Mtt. 9:18; Mtt. 14:33; Mtt. 15:25; Mtt. 28:9-17; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; John 5:18; John 5:23; John 9:38; John 20:28; Acts 7:59 (compare Ps. 31:5); Php. 2:9; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:13; Rev. 7:10
- J. **Jesus' titles as God** : Ps. 16:10; Ps. 45:6; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6 (Yehovah Tzidkenu); Mtt. 1:23; Mark 1:24; John 8:24; John 15:26; Acts 20:28; Rom. 8:9; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 1:3-4; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8; 1Pe. 1:11; Rev. 1:8; Rev. 1:17; Rev. 3:7 (cf. Isa. 43:3-14); Rev. 22:13
- K. **Jesus has authority to forgive sin**<sup>8</sup> : Ex. 23:21 (Father); Mtt. 9:2-5 Jesus; Mark 2:5-9 Jesus; Luke 5:20-23 Jesus; Luke 7:48 Jesus
- L. **Holy Spirit - deity** : Gen. 1:2; Ps. 139:7; Job 26:13; Mtt. 12:32 (rejection unforgivable); Luke 11:13 (holy); John 16:13; Rom. 1:4; Acts 5:3-4; Acts 28:25 (cf. Isa. 6:1-13); 1Cor. 2:10-11 (omniscient); 1Cor. 3:16 (cf. 1Cor. 6:19); 1Cor. 6:19 (cf. 1Cor. 3:16); 1Cor. 3:16 (cf. 1Cor. 6:19); 1Cor. 6:19 (cf. 1Cor. 3:16); 2Cor. 3:17; Heb. 1:1 (cf. 2Pe. 1:21); Heb. 9:14 (eternal); Heb. 10:15-17 (cf. Jer. 31:34); 1Pe. 4:14; 1Jn. 2:20
- M. **Holy Spirit - a person** : Holy Spirit - person : Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:8-10; Eze. 11:5; Eze. 43:6; John 6:63; John 14:16; John 15:26; John 16:7-14; Acts 5:3; Acts 8:29; Acts 10:19-20; Acts 13:2; Acts 16:6; Acts 21:10; Rom. 8:26; 2Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 10:15; Heb. 10:29

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<sup>1</sup> Class notes are available from <http://www.SpiritAndTruth.org/download/download.htm#e-sword> for use within the free bible study software available from <http://www.e-sword.net>

<sup>2</sup> Walvoord, John, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> The plural ending is usually described as a plural of majesty and not intended as a true plural when used of God. This is seen in the fact that the noun *ʾēlōhīm* is consistently used with singular verb forms and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular. Albright has suggested that the use of this majestic plural comes from the tendency in the ancient near east toward a universalism: "We find in Canaanite an increasing tendency to employ the plural *štorôt* 'startes', and *natôt* 'naths', in the clear sense of totality of manifestations of a deity" (William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 2d ed., p. 213). But a better reason can be seen in Scripture itself where, in the very first chapter of Gen, the necessity of a term conveying both the unity of the one God and yet allowing for a plurality of persons is found (Gen 1:2,26). This is further borne out by the fact that the form *ʾēlōhīm* occurs only in Hebrew and in no other Semitic language, not even in Biblical Aramaic (Gustav F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 88). R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999, c1980). "It is sometimes said that this one word [Elohim] had to be used in both [singular and plural] contexts since there is no alternative in Hebrew. This is not true however; the singular form of Elohim is Eloah and is used in passages such as Deu. 32:15-17 and Hab. 3:3." Fruchtenbaum, Arnold, *Messianic Christology*, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Hunt, Dave, and T.A. McMahon, *The Berean Call* [www.thebereancall.org](http://www.thebereancall.org) February p. 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the authenticity of this verse, see : Holland, Thomas. *Crowned With Glory*

<sup>6</sup> The resurrection is attributed to the members of the Trinity as follows; Jesus: John 2:19; 10:17 The Father: Acts 4:10; 10:41; Rom. 4:24; 6:4; 8:11 The Holy Spirit: 1Pe. 3:18

<sup>7</sup> "With the exception of Lutheran theologians, most interpreters regard Christ as omnipresent in His deity and local in His humanity." Walvoord, John F. *Jesus Christ Our Lord*. Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1969, p. 28

<sup>8</sup> "We can all understand how a man forgives offences against himself. You tread on my toe and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobbed and untrampled on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other men's toes and stealing other men's money? Asinine fatuity is the kindest description we should give of his conduct. Yet this is what Jesus did.... He unhesitatingly behaved as if He was the party chiefly concerned, the person chiefly offended in all offences. This makes sense only if He really was the God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin." C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 55-56.