

# Very Brief Study Notes on **THE TRINITY DOCTRINE**

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# Very Brief Study Notes on The Trinity Doctrine (By Max Hatton)

It was apparently the English preacher Robert South (1634-1716) who claimed, "If you deny the doctrine of the Trinity, you could lose your soul, but if you strive too hard to understand it, you could lose your wits." Nevertheless, the principle found in *Deuteronomy 29:29* requires us to seek to understand what God has revealed of Himself. We should do so with great humbleness.

*Deuteronomy 29:29 NIV* - The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever; that we may follow all the words of this law.

## What is the basis for our belief in the Trinity?

1. There is but one True God - *Isaiah 44:6; James 2:19, etc.*

*Isaiah 44:6 NIV* - "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

*James 2:19 NIV* - You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

2. There are 3 Persons that the Bible reveals to be True God (i.e. God by nature). We are therefore driven to the conclusion that God is a Trinity. It is not something that we have dragged in from Paganism or the Roman Catholic Church as some who attack our Church like to suggest. The Trinity is a Biblical doctrine and we believe it and teach it because this is so. We are compelled by Scripture to accept that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all God but there is only One God by nature.

## The Father

No one disputes that He is God so we will not investigate His credentials further.

## Jesus

1. **Jesus is identified as God in both the Old and New Testaments:** See *Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13, 14; Hebrews 1:8; Philippians 2:6, etc.*

*Isaiah 9:6 NIV* - For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

*John 1:1 NIV* - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

*John 20:28 NIV* - Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

*Romans 9:5 NIV* - Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human

*ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

*Titus 2:13-14 NIV - {13} while we wait for the blessed hope--the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, {14} who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

*Hebrews 1:8 NIV - But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.*

*Philippians 2:6 NIV - Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

2. **Jesus claimed the Divine Name "I AM" which Yahweh used when He revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush:** John 8:58 compare Exodus 3:14.

*John 8:58 NIV - "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

*Exodus 3:14 NIV - God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "*

3. **In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily:** Colossians 2:9.

*Colossians 2:9 NIV - For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,*

4. **Jesus is "The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End"** - Revelation 22:13 compare Isaiah 44:6; 48:12.

*Revelation 22:13 NIV - I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

*Isaiah 44:6 NIV - "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.*

*Isaiah 48:12 NIV - "Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last.*

5. **Jesus shares the glory of God:** John 17:5; Matthew 16:27 compare Isaiah 42:8; 48:11.

*John 17:5 NIV - And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

*Matthew 16:27 NIV - For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.*

*Isaiah 42:8 NIV - "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.*

*Isaiah 48:11 NIV - For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.*

6. **Jesus is the Creator:** Yahweh says He made everything by Himself - Isaiah 44:24. The New Testament states clearly that Jesus was the Creator and that He made everything for Himself - Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:10. Quite clearly Jesus is Yahweh God.

*Isaiah 44:24 NIV - "This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself,*

*Colossians 1:16 NIV - For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.*

*John 1:3 NIV - Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*Hebrews 1:10 NIV - He also says, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

7. **Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords:** Revelation 17:14; 19:16 compare Deuteronomy 10:17 and 1 Timothy 6:15.

*Revelation 17:14 NIV - They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings--and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."*

*Revelation 19:16 NIV - On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.*

*Deuteronomy 10:17 NIV - For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.*

*1 Timothy 6:15 NIV - which God will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords,*

8. **Jesus is Eternal:** Hebrews 7:3; Micah 5:2 compare Psalm 90:2; 93:2.

*Hebrews 7:3 NIV - Without father or mother; without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.*

*Micah 5:2 NIV - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*

*Psalms 90:2 NIV - Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

*Psalms 93:2 NIV - Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.*

9. **Jesus accepts worship:** Worship is for God only - Exodus 34:14; Matthew 4:10; Acts 10:25, 26; Revelation 19:10; 22:8, 9. Jesus accepted worship - Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:50-52; Hebrews 1:6. To "call upon the name" is related to worship - Genesis 4:26; 12:8; Ps 116:17; 79:6; Jeremiah 10:25; Zephaniah 3:9; Joel 2:32. This phrase used with reference to Jesus - Romans 10:13; Acts 9:14; 9:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 22:16; 2 Timothy 2:22.

**Exodus 34:14 NIV** - Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

**Matthew 4:10 NIV** - Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

**Acts 10:25-26 NIV** - {25} As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. {26} But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

**Revelation 19:10 NIV** - At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

**Revelation 22:8-9 NIV** - {8} I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. {9} But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!"

**Matthew 28:9 NIV** - Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

**Luke 24:50-52 NIV** - {50} When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. {51} While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. {52} Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

**Hebrews 1:6 NIV** - And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

**Genesis 4:26 NIV** - Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

**Genesis 12:8 NIV** - From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

**Psalms 116:17 NIV** - I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD.

**Psalms 79:6 NIV** - Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name;

**Jeremiah 10:25 NIV** - Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the peoples who do not call on your name. For they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him completely and destroyed his homeland.

**Zephaniah 3:9 NIV** - "Then I will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

**Joel 2:32 NIV** - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

**Romans 10:13 NIV** - for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

**Acts 9:14 NIV** - And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

**Acts 9:20-21 NIV** - At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

**1 Corinthians 1:2 NIV** - To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:

**Acts 22:16 NIV** - And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

**2 Timothy 2:22 NIV** - Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

**10. Jesus hears prayers:** Acts 1:24; 7:59, 60; 2 Corinthians 12:8, 9; John 14:14; Rev 22:20.

**Acts 1:24 NIV** - Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

**Acts 7:59-60 NIV** – {59} While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." {60} Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

**2 Corinthians 12:8-9 NIV** – {8} Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. {9} But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

**John 14:14 NIV** - You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

**Revelation 22:20 NIV** - He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**11. Jesus is Omnipresent (Everywhere present at the same time):** Matthew 18:20; 28:20.

**Matthew 18:20 NIV** - For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

**Matthew 28:20 NIV** - and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

12. **Jesus reveals God to us:** John 1:18; 14:9; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3. No mere man can reveal God - only God visible could reveal the invisible God. Jesus was both God and man - John 1:1, 14.

***John 1:18 NIV** - No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*

***John 14:9 NIV** - Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

***Colossians 1:15 NIV** - The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

***Hebrews 1:3 NIV** - The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

***John 1:1 NIV** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

***John 1:14 NIV** - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

13. **A comparison of some NT and OT passages showing that Jesus is Yahweh.**

Hebrews 1:8-12 with Psalm 102:24-27

***Hebrews 1:8-12 NIV** - {8} But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. {9} You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." {10} He also says, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. {11} They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. {12} You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."*

***Psalms 102:24-27 NIV** - {24} So I said: "Do not take me away, my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations. {25} In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. {26} They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. {27} But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*

John 12:36-41 with Isaiah 6:1-3, 10

***John 12:36-41 NIV** - {36} Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them. {37} Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. {38} This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" {39} For this reason they could not believe, because, as*



*Isaiah says elsewhere: {40} "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn--and I would heal them." {41} Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.*

***Isaiah 6:1-3,10 NIV** - {1} In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. {2} Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. {3} And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ... {10} Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."*

1 Peter 3:14, 15 with Isaiah 8:12, 13.

***1 Peter 3:14-15 NIV** - {14} But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." {15} But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

***Isaiah 8:12-13 NIV** - {12} "Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. {13} The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread.*

14. **Jesus is " he who searches hearts and minds "** - Revelation 2:23. "you (Yahweh) alone know the hearts of all men" - 1 Kings 8:39, see also Psalm 7:9.

***Revelation 2:23 NIV** - I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.*

***1 Kings 8:39 NIV** - then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart),*

***Psalms 7:9 NIV** - Bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure-- you, the righteous God who probes minds and hearts.*

15. **First fruits were offered to God** but in Revelation 14:4 they are spoken of as offered to God and the Lamb.

***Revelation 14:4 NIV** - These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.*

16. **Saved people will be priests of God and of the Lamb:** Revelation 20:6.

***Revelation 20:6 NIV** - Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

Some, influenced by people such as "Jehovah's Witnesses," have been led to believe that the New Testament reveals that Jesus was less than the Father by nature. A close look at the texts concerned reveals that Jesus was less in *position* not *nature*. We must not fail to notice that the Trinity is revealed to us in the context of the plan of redemption (covering the whole Bible). Jesus accepted a subordinate position to the Father as the Messiah. The above evidence clearly shows that He was not less than the Father by *nature*. (His Divinity was veiled while He was a man - He did use it on occasions - but never for His personal comfort or purposes).

## The Holy Spirit is a Person

We do not learn much of His personality in the Old Testament, however, revelation is progressive (Romans 16:25, 26; Ephesians 3:5, 6)...

**Romans 16:25-26 NIV** - {25} Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, {26} but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith--

**Ephesians 3:5-6 NIV** - {5} which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. {6} This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

and the Old Testament also leaves us in doubt as to the nature of "the Word" (e.g. Psalm 33:6)...

**Psalms 33:6 NIV** - By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

but the New Testament makes it quite clear that He is a Person and is in fact God - John 1:1-3, etc.

**John 1:1-3 NIV** - {1} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was with God in the beginning. {3} Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

We cannot understand much about the personality and nature of the Holy Spirit for He is far different to us. However, the following references insist upon His personality.

1. **He performs personal actions in association with other persons:** Matthew 28:19; Acts 15:28; Revelation 22:17 - **NB** The Holy Spirit is a separate person from the Father and Jesus - Matthew 28:19 etc.

**Matthew 28:19 NIV** - 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,

**Acts 15:28 NIV** - It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

**Revelation 22:17 NIV** - The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

2. **He takes the place of Jesus:** John 14:16.

*John 14:16 NIV - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever--*

Could an impersonal force take the place of the Divine Jesus on earth? The Greek word translated "Comforter," "Helper," or similar here is *parakletos*. This New Testament Greek word is never applied to other than persons.

3. **In John chapters 14-16 Jesus many times over deliberately broke the rules of Greek Grammar and referred to the Holy Spirit as " He, " " Him, " etc.** Noted Theologians such as Leon Morris and J. I. Packer have pointed this out. Our own Scholar Wooldrow Whidden, on page 71 of *The Trinity*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, 2002, says, " *we should observe that while the word " Spirit " (Greek pneuma) is in the neuter gender in Greek, the personal pronoun ekeinos ( ' that one, ' or ' He, ' clearly used to refer to the neuter Spirit) is in the masculine gender. It is this grammatical fact that has led the majority of translators to render the other personal pronouns called for in these passages as ' He ' rather than ' it ' or ' that one '...*" The Greek word for "Spirit" is a neuter word and therefore should rightly be referred to as "it" but a perusal of Bible translations will confirm that because of what Whidden has stated Bible translators feel compelled to translate various pronouns as "He" etc. We must either accept that Jesus did this in order to make it clear to us that the Holy Spirit is a Person, or, we have to accept that our perfect Jesus made a number of uncharacteristic blunders.
4. **He exhibits qualities which evidence personal existence: Mind** - Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 2:10, **Will** - 1 Corinthians 12:11, **Foreknowledge** - John 16:13, **He speaks** - Acts 1:16, **Commands and Forbids** - Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2,4; (In these verses just mentions He refers to Himself as "me" and "I.") 16:6, 7; 10:19, 20, **Appoints** - Acts 20:28, **Vexed and Grieved** - Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30, **Works Miracles** - Acts 2:4; 8:39, **Can be insulted** - Hebrews 10:29, **Blasphemed** - Mark 3:29, **Loves us** - Romans 15:30.

*Romans 8:27 NIV - nd he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

*1 Corinthians 2:10 NIV - these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*

*1 Corinthians 12:11 NIV - All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

*John 16:13 NIV - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

*Acts 1:16 NIV - and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.*

*Acts 8:29 NIV - The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."*

*Acts 11:12 NIV - The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.*

**Acts 13:2, 4 NIV** - {2} While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ... {4} The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

**Acts 16:6-7 NIV** - {6} Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. {7} When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

**Acts 10:19-20 NIV** - {19} While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. {20} So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

**Acts 20:28 NIV** - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

**Isaiah 63:10 NIV** - Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

**Ephesians 4:30 NIV** - And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**Acts 2:4 NIV** - All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**Acts 8:39 NIV** - When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

**Hebrews 10:29 NIV** - How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

**Mark 3:29 NIV** - but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin."

**Romans 15:30 NIV** - I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

## The Holy Spirit is God

Most, even those who deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, will admit that He is God in some way.

1. **He is clearly referred to as God:** Acts 5:3, 4. Compare 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17 with 6:19 and also 2 Corinthians 6:16. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:11 with 12:28.

**Acts 5:3-4 NIV** - {3} Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? {4} Didn't it belong to you before it was sold?"

*And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."*

**1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NIV** - {16} *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? {17} If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.*

**2 Corinthians 6:16 NIV** - *What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

**1 Corinthians 12:11 NIV** - *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

## 2. The Holy Spirit is Yahweh: Compare:

Jeremiah 31:33, 34 with Hebrews 10:15-17.

**Jeremiah 31:33-34 NIV** - {33} *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. {34} No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

**Hebrews 10:15-17 NIV** - {15} *The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: {16} "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." {17} Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."*

Psalms 95:7-11 with Hebrews 3:7-11.

**Psalms 95:7-11 NIV** - {7} *for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice, {8} "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, {9} where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. {10} For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.' {11} So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "*

**Hebrews 3:7-11 NIV** - {7} *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, {8} do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, {9} where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. {10} That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' {11} So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "*

Isaiah 6:9, 10 with Acts 28:25-28.

**Isaiah 6:9-10 NIV** - {9} *He said, "Go and tell this people: " 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' {10} Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn*

*and be healed."*

*Acts 28:25-28 NIV - {25} They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: {26} " 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." {27} For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' {28} "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"*

3. 2 Samuel 23:2 with 2 Samuel 23:3.

*2 Samuel 23:2-3 NIV - {2} "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. {3} The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: 'When one rules over people in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God,*

4. **The Holy Spirit is Eternal:** Hebrews 9:14.

*Hebrews 9:14 NIV - How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

Because the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all the One God in Triunity (Trinity), what one does has the value of them all doing it. When the Holy Spirit comes to us it is the same as the Father coming to us, or of Jesus coming to us, or of the whole Three coming to us. The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the Spirit of Christ - Romans 8:9, 10; Galatians 4:6; Philippians 1:19, etc. Luke 21:15 says Jesus will tell His followers what to say in time of trouble while Mark 13:11 says it is the Holy Spirit Who will do this. This is where some dissidents have become confused. They think that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the same Person or that the Holy Spirit is some force that comes from Jesus and the Father. The truth is that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the same God - not the same Person. Remember the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19, 20 where they are spoken of as separate Persons.

*Romans 8:9-10 NIV - {9} You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. {10} But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.*

*Galatians 4:6 NIV - Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

*Philippians 1:19 NIV - or I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.*

*Luke 21:15 NIV - For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.*

*Mark 13:11 NIV - Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.*

**Matthew 28:19-20 NIV** - {19} *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, {20} and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

John 14:18 tells that Jesus will come to His followers - Verse 23 says that both the Father and the Son will make their abode with believers. Verse 26 indicates that this will be through the Holy Spirit - see also verse 28 first part. There is no need for confusion - there are Three Persons all working in perfect harmony as One God.

**John 14:18, 23, 26, 28 NIV** - {18} *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ... {23} Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ... {26} But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ... {28} "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.*

## What might we expect God to be?

Illustration: An Amoeba is a microscopic single cell creature. There is a great gap between an Amoeba and a human made up of millions of cells. We would expect the gap between a human and the Infinite God to be enormously greater. We would expect God to be vastly more complex than we are. See *Isaiah 40:18, 25*.

**Isaiah 40:18, 25 NIV** - {18} *With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? ... {25} "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.*

## We believe a lot of things we don't really understand

For example, light. Some say it is made up of particles, others say it is composed of waves. Yet others say it is a combination of both. We might not understand it but we believe it. We don't know how could God always have existed? - How can He know the end from the beginning? Christians don't understand these things but we believe them.

## Do we expect God to explain Himself fully?

Illustrations: God is like a very tall man who stoops down and lisps in a little child's ear. John Calvin (16<sup>th</sup> century Reformer) referred to the Bible as God's "baby talk." God meets us where we are and reveals Himself to the degree that suits His purpose and to the degree that we can understand. Remember *Deuteronomy 29:29*. He expects us to seek to understand what He has revealed of Himself.

**Deuteronomy 29:29 NIV** - *The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*

# God has revealed Himself to us

God has revealed Himself to us in what is termed " the economy of the plan of redemption. "

In other words, the terms "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit," are suitable to help us understand the Heavenly Three and their relationship to One Another in the plan of Redemption (This is what the Bible is all about).

We do not know how each of the 3 Persons would be described apart from the plan of redemption.

Some other Biblical models are:

1. Shepherd ( *Psalm 23:1; Hebrews 13:20* );

*Psalm 23:1 NIV - A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*Hebrews 13:20 NIV - Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,*

2. Parent ( *Jeremiah 3:19; Matthew 6:9* );

*Jeremiah 3:19 NIV - "I myself said, " 'How gladly would I treat you like my children and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.' I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.*

*Matthew 6:9 NIV - "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

3. Light ( *Isaiah 9:2; 1 John 1:5* );

*Isaiah 9:2 NIV - The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.*

*1 John 1:5 NIV - This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

4. Rock ( *Psalm 18:2; 1 Corinthians 10:4* ).

*Psalm 18:2 NIV - The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*1 Corinthians 10:4 NIV - and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.*

These models help us to understand what God is like.



# God's revelation to us of the plan of redemption

God's revelation to us of the plan of redemption, including an understanding of Him, is progressive.

The Holy Spirit was only fully revealed when Jesus was about to return to heaven. Jesus ministers for us in the Heavenly Sanctuary and the Holy Spirit ministers for us on the earth. God has revealed Himself gradually - it would be too much for us if a full presentation were given all at once

## God has not revealed all about Himself

Let us not forget that a complete understanding of God is beyond us. As St. Augustine rightly said: "If you can understand it, it is not God." Remember *Isaiah 40:18*.

*Isaiah 40:18 NIV - With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him?*

Illustration: We can see only one tenth of an Iceberg. Likewise there is much more to God than our finite minds can possibly understand or absorb.

Illustration: A bucket of salt water, sand, and sea weed cannot help us understand all about an Ocean. Likewise, what we know of God is no more than a small part of what could be known of Him.

The doctrine of the Trinity is an adequate definition of what has been revealed in Scripture.

## How then shall we describe the Three?

1. **Subordinationism** : This system claims that Jesus and the Spirit are lesser deities. Some say that God the Father created them.
2. **Modalism**: This claims that God just manifests Himself in one of three ways on various occasions.
3. **Tritheism** : The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are three separate deities (a form of polytheism).
4. **Arianism** : The Father created Jesus who created the Holy Spirit.
5. **Semi-Arianism**: Jesus was born from the Father in the mystical past. The Holy Spirit is not a person but is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. All shades of Arianism have been condemned as heretical when they have popped up down through the Christian centuries. Today some confused Seventh-day Adventists have been fooled into accepting the system. If you want to be an Arian you have to accept that there is a Big God (the Father) and a little god (Jesus). This is quite unacceptable and is a miniature form of Polytheism. Sin is an infinite problem. It has affected the whole of creation. How could any sacrifice which was of less than of Infinite value pay for the sin of the whole world? If Jesus could die in His Divinity He would have to have been of something less in substance than the Father - yet semi-Arians say He was born from the Father. Would they say that God brought forth from Himself something less perfect than He was? Their greatest problem is that they have not understood the Greek word *monogenes* which the King James Version wrongly translated as "Only Begotten" when referring to Jesus, but as "only" when referring to others. The word has been translated something like "unique" in modern translations. My paper [\*Jesus as Monogenes\*](#) needs to be studied on this matter.
6. **The Trinity** : There are three Persons in One Substance or Essence. God is Three as to Persons but One as to Substance. This must be true if there is only One True God for the

Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Only the Trinity doctrine is faithful to Scripture. Imagine the great howl of protest that would have arisen in the 1<sup>st</sup> century if Christians preached three gods to the strictly monotheistic Jews. *Matthew 28:19, 20* presents Three Persons all in the One Name.

*Matthew 28:19-20 NIV - {19} 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, {20} and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

See also *Mark 3:16, 17; 2 Corinthians 13:14*, etc.

*Mark 3:16-17 NIV - {16} These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), {17} James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"),*

*2 Corinthians 13:14 NIV - May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

A very good statement on the Trinity is found on page 367 of Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *WHEN CRITICS ASK*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1992: "**God is one in essence, but three in Persons. God has one nature, but three centers of consciousness. That is, there is only one What in God, but there are three Whos. There is one It, but three I's. This is a mystery, but not a contradiction. It would be contradictory to say God was only one person, but also was three persons. Or that God is only one nature, but that He also had three natures. But to declare, as orthodox Christians do, that God is one essence, eternally revealed in three distinct persons is not a contradiction.**"

The Trinity doctrine helps us to see the full dimension of God's love. He didn't send an innocent Third Party to die for us - He came Himself in the Person of Jesus and died for us. What greater exhibition of love could we have than this? See 1 Corinthians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 2:14, 15.

*1 Corinthians 2:8 NIV - one of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

*2 Corinthians 5:19 NIV - that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

*Acts 20:28 NIV - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

*Hebrews 2:14-15 NIV - {14} Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- {15} and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

God is complete in Himself. The Trinity teaching makes this clear to us. Before He created anything else, He was able to express and experience love within the confines of the Godhead. He didn't need to create in order to be able to express love as some have erroneously claimed.

It hardly needs to be pointed out that the above is but a very brief indication of the Scriptural evidence, which requires Bible believers to accept that God is a Trinity. God is far above us and beyond our comprehension. To understand all about God we would have to be God. God has revealed certain things about Himself in His Word and we should be prepared to accept this information with gratitude and leave it at that. I would suggest to those wanting to gain a much clearer understanding of the doctrine that they should read my [book](#) "*Understanding the Trinity.*" It is available at Seventh-day Adventist bookstores.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. He made us, He has maintained responsibility for us, He loves us, He died for us, and He is coming again soon to restore for us that which was lost through sin. How can we do other than love, adore, worship, and serve Him? If we lift Him up we can be sure that He will never let us down. I, for one, can testify that this is true.

*"To God the Father, God the Son,  
And God the Spirit, Three in one,  
Laud, honor, might, and glory be  
From age to age eternally.  
Amen."*

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