

Systematic Theology Pt. 14

Theology Proper (E)

“The Triunity of God”

The Triunity of God, is an unfathomable truth, found in the Scriptures.
The tri-unity of God is a transcendent fact that passes our understanding!
The Trinity of God is a doctrine that is fundamental to the Christian faith;
Belief or disbelief in the trinity marks orthodoxy from unorthodoxy.
Human reason cannot fathom the tri-unity nor can logic explain it.

- Remember there is only one God!
- Duet. 6:4 • 1 Tim. 2:5 • 1 Cor. 8:4

But, He is also a Tri-unity; that is there is not only one God, (monotheism),
but there are three persons in that one God.

I. The Meaning of the Word Trinity

1. What it is not:

A. It's not - Tritheism.

B. It's not - Modalism.

C. It's not - Arianism.

2. What it is:

A. The word is not in the Bible!

B. The word “Triunity” Lit. “The state or character of Being three”.

“What, then, does the word Trinity mean? It means that God is a triunity: He is a plurality within unity. God has a plurality of persons and a unity of essence; God is three persons in one nature. There is only one “What” (essence) in God, but there are three “Whos” (persons) in that one What. god has three “I’s” in His one “It” - there are three Subjects in one Object.” - Norman Geisler

II. The Biblical Basis for the Triunity

The doctrine of the triunity is based on two basic Biblical teachings.

A. There is one and only one God.

B. There are three distinct persons who are God:

- God the Father
- God the Son
- God the Holy Spirit

We have already seen that God is one! Let's look at the three different persons that are God!

“In addition to declaring God to be one in nature or essence, the Scriptures affirm that there are three distinct persons who are God. All are called God, and all have the essential characteristics of a person. Personhood is traditionally understood as one who has intellect, feelings, and will. All three of these characteristics are attributed to all three members of the Trinity in Scripture. Essentially, personhood refers to an “I,” a “who,” or a subject. Each “I” in the Trinity possesses (by virtue of its one common nature) the power to think, feel, and choose. Personhood itself is its I-ness or who-ness.”

- Norman Geisler

1. The Father is God

- John 6:27 • Rom. 1:17 • Gal. 1:1 • 1 Cor. 8:6

2. The Son is God

- Heb. 1:8 • Rom. 9:5 • John 20:28 • John 8:58 • Phil. 2:6

3. The Holy Spirit is God

A. He is called God, Acts 5:3-4

B. He has the attributes of God

- Omniscience, 1 Cor. 2:10
- Omnipotence, Job 33:4
- Omnipresence, Ps. 139:7

C. He performs the acts of God

- Creation, Gen. 1:2
- Regeneration, Titus 3:5
- Intercession, Rom. 8:26
- Sanctification, 2 Thess. 2:13

III. The Trinity and the Old Testament

A. Gen. 1:1 “In the beginning God “Elohim” a plural form for God.

B. Gen. 1:2 “...the Spirit of God moved.”

C. Gen. 1:26 “And God said let us...”

D. Isa. 61:1 “the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...”

IV. The Trinity and the New Testament

A. The Baptism of Jesus, Matt. 3:16-17

B. The Baptism Formula, Matt. 28:19

C. The Teaching of Jesus, John 14:6, 16

D. The Apostolic Benediction, 2 Cor. 13:14

V. Difficulties with the Trinity

Paul Enns- *“Those who deny the Trinity sometimes object to the use of certain terms that seem to imply that Christ is inferior to the Father, which if true, would deny the Trinity. Several of these problematic terms are noted here.”*

1. *Meaning of begotten.* The term *begotten* is used in several senses with respect to Christ. First, it is evident from Matthew 1:20 that Christ was begotten in His humanity but not in His deity. Christ was God from all eternity (Mic. 5:2), but at Bethlehem He took to Himself an additional nature, namely, a human nature. The Holy Spirit superintended Mary’s conception to assure the sinlessness of the humanity of Christ. It is with reference to the humanity of Christ that the term *begotten* is used; it could never be used of God. In time and space Jesus was declared to be the Son of God (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:32-33; Rom. 1:4). These verses all emphasize that Jesus’ Sonship is vindicated or verified as a result of the resurrection, but the resurrection did not make Him the Son of God. Jesus has been the son of God from eternity. Thus, Psalm 2:7 and Acts 13:33 emphasize that begotten refers to the public declaration of the Sonship of Christ (but not the origination of the Sonship).

2. *Meaning of first-born.* Those who deny the deity of Christ frequently do so by referring to the term *first-born*, suggesting that if the term relates to Christ it must imply He had a beginning in time. However, both a lexical study of the word as well as a contextual study of the usages provides a different solution to the meaning for first-born. In its Old Testament culture the predominant emphasis was on the status of the oldest son. He enjoyed the double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17), privileges over other family members (27:1-4, 35-37), preferential treatment (Gen. 43:33), and the respect of others (Gen. 37:22). Figuratively, the word denotes priority or supremacy (Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9) and is so used of Christ. In Colossians 1:18 where Christ is referred to as *first-born* the meaning

is clear: as *first-born* Christ is Head of the church and preeminent in everything. In Hebrews 1:6 the supremacy of Christ as the first-born is seen in that angels worship Him. Only God is worshiped. Psalm 89:27 is perhaps one of the clearest explanations of the term first-born. This is an example of synthetic poetry in Hebrew in which the second line explains the first. In this Messianic Psalm God affirms that Messiah will be the first-born, that is, the highest of kings of the earth. First-born is explained as ruling over the kings of the entire earth. From both a linguistic and exegetical study it is clear that first-born draws attention to the preeminent status of Jesus as Messiah.

3. Meaning of only-begotten. The term only-begotten (Gk. monogenes) (cf. John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9) does not suggest a beginning point in time but rather means that Jesus as the only-begotten Son of God is “unique,” “the only one of its kind,” “the only example of its category.” Only-begotten “is used to mark out Jesus uniquely above all earthly and heavenly beings.” In Genesis 22:2, 12, 16 it reflects the concept of “only, precious” as Isaac was viewed by his father, Abraham. John the apostle describes the glory radiated by the unique Son of God - no one else radiated the glory of the Father (John 1:14); moreover, the Son “explained” the Father - no one but the unique Son could explain the Father. It was the unique Son whom God sent into the world; eternal life was provided only through the unique Son of God (John 3:16). In examining the passages it is evident that *only-begotten* does not suggest a coming into existence, but rather it expresses the *uniqueness* of the person. Christ was unique as the Son of God, sent by the Father from heaven.

VI. Practical Implications of God’s Triunity

1. In Creation.
2. In the Carnation
3. In Salvation.
4. In Revelation.
5. In Marriage and Family.
6. Priority without Inferiority.
7. Prayer.

