

AV, BEN, RUACH HaKODESH: The ONE True G-D - Part 03 (RMB 12/13/08)

Micah 5:2

THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION

I promised to share a well tested theological definition of the G-dhead with you, and here it is: *There is only one G-d, but in the unity of the G-dhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons; the same in substance or essence, but distinct in subsistence or existence.*

This has been a major area of conflict concerning the Scriptures. Throughout the history of Israel and the history of the Church, *there has been tremendous opposition to this concept of the Tri-Unity of G-d. "How could G-d be one, and how could G-d be three?"* This seems to be a contradiction.

Those who deny this vital doctrine ignore the WHOLE COUNSEL OF SCRIPTURE, and they use the WRONG mathematical formula:

The INFINITE G-d does not fit into their FINITE puny **pea-brain** box: $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$

There is a valid mathematical formula to express the G-dhead: $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

In church history there have been five major errors concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Some of these are ancient errors, but they all have modern counterparts.

Sabellianism

One of the first early Church heresies is called "Sabellianism," also known as "Modalism" or "Modalistic Monarchianism." *Sabellianism teaches that there is only one personality, and not three, but this one personality would reveal Himself in three different ways. G-d was said to have three "faces" or "masks" (Grk. *prosopa*).*

The term "Monarchianism" derives from the belief that G-d the Father (Monarch) was the only person of the G-dhead. "Modalism" refers to the idea that the *believer perceives* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as different *modes* or *aspects* of one G-d, rather than three distinct persons in G-d Himself. As Creator and Lawgiver, G-d would reveal Himself as the Father. As the Redeemer, He would appear as the Son. As Regenerator and Sanctifier, He would appear as the Holy Spirit.

Sabellianism stems from an African church leader from Libya named **Sabellius**, whose teachings flourished (AD 215) in the Roman Pentapolis (five port cities, Adriatic coast of the Italian Peninsula).

Our knowledge of Sabellius is drawn mostly from the polemical (dispute, refute) writings of his opponents. Sabellian teaching was opposed vigorously by **Tertullian** (ca.160 – ca.220 AD), who was a notable early apologist and anti-heretical writer, of Berber origin. Tertullian is perhaps most famous for coining the term **Trinity** (Latin *trinitas*) and giving the first exposition of the formula "*three Persons, one Substance.*"

Today, this error is taught by “Oneness Pentacostalism,” or the “Jesus Only” movement. They say only Jesus is G-d: *Jesus is the Father, Jesus is the Son, and Jesus is the Holy Spirit*. The modern teachings of Jesus Only deny the Tri-Unity of the G-dhead, and this a revival of ancient Sabellianism.

Arianism

Another early heresy is called “Arianism.” Arianism stems from a church leader named Arias who lived (AD 250-336) and taught in Alexandria, Egypt. Arias taught that *G-d the Father, G-d the Son, and G-d the Holy Spirit were not the same in essence, but different*.

Arianism says that only G-d the Father is eternal. The Son was **created** by G-d the Father before anything else; then everything else was created through the Son, who Himself was a created being.

While we don't talk about Arians any more, this ancient heresy is very much alive today in the various cults, such as **Jehovah's Witnesses** and **Mormonism**, which also deny the eternal pre-existence of the Son by teaching that the Son was created by G-d the Father.

Socinianism

A third heresy that plagued the Church is known as “Socinianism,” also called “Dynamic Monarchianism.” *Socinianism, which devaluated the Tri-Unity, did not see all three Persons as co-equals; rather, it saw each Person as less than the previous Person. They taught that only the Father is G-d.*

This heresy originated with **Laelius Socinus** (died 1562 in Zurich), and became more widespread through his nephew **Faustus Socinus** (died 1604 in Poland). The Socinians congregated especially in Transylvania, in Poland and in the Netherlands.

Socinianism teaches that the Son is **not** G-d; the Holy Spirit is **not** G-d; only the Father is truly G-d. *The Son is man; the Holy Spirit is not a personality, but only a divine influence.* Elements of this teaching are common today among certain cultic groups.

Unitarianism

The fourth heresy is “Unitarianism” which, very simply, denies the Tri-Unity completely. It denies that the G-dhead consists of three co-equal Persons. It is a denial of the tri-personality *and is very similar to Judaism in this regard*.

Unitarians believe they are the original form of Christianity. Strictly monotheistic, *they maintain that Jesus was a great man and a prophet of G-d, perhaps even a supernatural being, but **not** G-d himself.*

Tritheism

The fifth heresy is called “Tritheism.” Essentially, this is Polytheism, but limits the number of G-ds to three. This is a denial of the **unity** of the G-dhead, and sees three G-ds rather than three personalities of the one G-d. *While Unitarianism denies three personalities and only affirms one G-d, Tritheism denies the unity of the three Persons and sees them as three separate G-ds.* At first glance, **Mormonism** appears to be tritheistic, but is in reality polytheistic or more specifically henotheistic.

Summary: *None of these five views adequately deals with the plethora of Scripture which clearly teaches the concept of a Tri-Unity. True biblical teaching about the G-dhead must encompass three specific areas: the Plurality, the Unity, and the Trinity of the G-dhead. We have examined eleven different lines of evidence from the OT in this regard thus far.* Today we'll conclude our series by looking at three more lines of evidence (for a total of 14) from the pages of the NT.

THE TRINITY OF THE G-dHEAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the NT, there are three major lines of evidence for the Trinity of the G-dhead.

1. Only Three Persons Are Ever Called G-d

Only three Persons are ever called G-d, and no more than three Persons are ever seen together.

Matthew 3:16-17

16 **Yeshua**, when he was immersed, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the **Spirit** of G-d descending as a *dove, and coming on him. 17 Behold, a **voice** out of the heavens said, *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.* HNV

In the context of the baptism of Yeshua, we see exactly three persons. The Son is seen in the Person of Yeshua; *the Spirit is seen because He comes down in the bodily form of a dove; and the Father* is made present by the audible voice that comes down out of the heavens, saying: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* (* Luke 3:22 "bodily form like a dove..." Gr. *somatikos*, corporeal, bodily)

Matthew 28:19

Go, and make *talmidim* of all nations, immersing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Ruach HaKodesh...** HNV

In this example, once again, only three Persons are mentioned specifically, no less than three, but no more either. These three Persons are now given titles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Notice the grammatical contradiction (very similar to what we saw going on in the OT). The command is to go and baptize in the NAME of, *singular*. It does not say, "in the NAMES of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," *which would have been more grammatically correct.* But rather, it is in the NAME of. The word name is singular, emphasizing the **unity** of the G-dhead. But then, this one name belongs to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the **Trinity** of the G-dhead.

John 14:16-17

16 And **I** will pray the **Father**, and he shall give you another (*allos*) Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, 17 even the **Spirit** of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. ASV

Notice again the three Persons mentioned in this context. One Person is the speaker, Yeshua, who is identified by the pronoun I. *The second Person is the Father, to whom He will pray.* The third Person is the Holy Spirit, who is going to be sent.

I Corinthians 12:4-6

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. 5 And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same **Lord**. 6 And there are diversities of workings, but the same **G-d**, who worketh all things in all. ASV

Once again three Persons are mentioned, but no more. Verse 4 mentions the Spirit, who is the Holy Spirit. *V5 mentions the Lord, who is the Son.* And v6 mentions G-d, who, in this case, is G-d the Father.

II Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the **Lord Yeshua the Messiah**, the love of **G-d**, and the communion of the **Ruach HaKodesh**, be with you all. *Amein.*

Notice the three Persons in this fifth NT example: The grace of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah [the Son], the love of G-d [the Father], and the communion of the Ruach HaKodesh [the Holy Spirit]. *Again, three Persons are mentioned, no more and no less.*

I Peter 1:2

*...according to the foreknowledge of **G-d the Father**, in sanctification of the **Spirit**, that you may obey **Yeshua the Messiah** and be sprinkled in his blood: Grace to you and shalom be multiplied.*

In this last example of the Trinity of the G-dhead in the New Testament, verse 2 mentions three Persons: G-d the Father, *who is responsible for the foreknowledge;* the Spirit, *who is responsible for sanctification;* and the Son, Yeshua the Messiah, who is responsible for the sprinkling [shedding] of His blood for the sins of the world.

Summary: From these passages, *it is clear that only three Persons are ever called "G-d," and no more than three Persons are ever seen together.*

In keeping with the teaching of the OT, the NT clearly recognizes that there are three Persons in the G-dhead. But, while the OT clearly taught a Tri-Unity, it did not actually name the members of this Tri-Unity; this comes specifically with NT revelation.

The First Person is called G-d the Father.

The Second Person is called G-d the Son.

*It is the NT that answers the question of Proverbs 30:4: What is his son's name? **His Son's name is Yeshua.*** In accordance with the OT, He was sent by G-d to be the Messiah, **but this time as a man**, instead of an Angel (Exo 3:6, burning bush). He was sent for a specific purpose: to die for our sins. In essence, what happened was that *G-d became a man* in order to accomplish the work of Atonement.

The Third Person is called G-d the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the NT, *He is related to the work of the Second Person* in keeping with the teaching of the OT.

2. Only Three Persons Have the Attributes of G-d

The second major NT line of evidence is that only three Persons have the attributes of G-d. *There are four particular, divine attributes which only three Persons possess.*

Eternality

The first attribute is that of eternity. *Only three Persons are said to have this attribute in that only three Persons have always existed and will always continue to exist.*

The Father has this attribute of eternity in **Psalm 90:2**, which speaks of the Father being from everlasting to everlasting.

The Son also has the attribute of eternity in **Micah 5:2** (quoted in Matthew 2:5-6). Although in His humanity, He would be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2 also states that, as to His deity, He has been of old, from everlasting. *The Hebrew words that Micah uses are the strongest possible terms concerning the concept of eternity past.* The Son's eternity is also taught in **John 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with G-d, and the Word was G-d.**

According to this verse, the Son existed in the beginning with G-d the Father. In other words, as long as G-d has existed, so also the Son has existed. *Since G-d the Father has existed from all eternity, therefore, the Son must have existed for all eternity as well.*

John 1:1 is proof that the cultic claims of the Son being created by G-d the Father, are a bald-faced lie. The point of John 1:1 is that as long as the Father has existed, which has been for all eternity, that is how long the Son has existed. The eternity of the Son is also found in **John 1:15** and **8:58**.

The Holy Spirit also has the attribute of eternity according to **Hebrews 9:14**:
...how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal (i-o-ne-os) Spirit offered himself without blemish to G-d, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living G-d?

Whereas there is no single word in Hebrew that conveys the idea of "eternal" as we think of it in English, the Greek word *i-o-ne-os* used here unequivocally means: *without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be, never to cease, everlasting.*

Omnipotence

The second attribute is that of omnipotence, which means "all-powerful." *Only three Persons have the attribute of omnipotence.* **G-d the Father** is omnipotent in **I Peter 1:5**. **The Son** is omnipotent in **Hebrews 1:3**. **The Holy Spirit** is omnipotent in **Romans 15:19**.

Omniscience

The third attribute is that of omniscience, which means "all-knowing." **The Father** is omniscient in **Jeremiah 17:10**. **The Son** is omniscient in **John 16:30; 21:17**; and **Revelation 2:23**. **The Holy Spirit** is omniscient in **I Corinthians 2:10-11**.

Omnipresence

The fourth attribute which only three Persons have is omnipresence, meaning that “G-d is everywhere.” **The Father** is omnipresent according to **Jeremiah 23:24**. **The Son** is omnipresent according to **Matthew 18:20** and **28:20**. **The Holy Spirit** is omnipresent according to **Psalms 139:7-10**.

Summary: Thus, the second line of evidence that the plurality of the G-dhead is limited to a Trinity is the fact that only three Persons have the attributes of G-d; in particular, *the uniquely divine attributes of eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence*.

3. Only Three Persons Know the Works of G-d

There is a third line of evidence for the Trinity of the G-dhead in the NT: *only three Persons act like G-d or do the works of G-d*. There are three specific examples in this area.

The Work of the Creation of the Universe

The first example is the Creation of the universe. *The thrust of the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is that G-d is the Creator of the universe*. The Creation of the universe is a specific work of G-d, and yet in the Scriptures, there are three different Persons who are responsible for the Creation. **The Father** is responsible for the Creation of the universe in **Psalms 102:25**. **The Son** is responsible for the Creation of the universe in **John 1:3**; and **Colossians 1:16**. **The Holy Spirit** is responsible for the Creation of the universe in **Genesis 1:2**; **Job 26:13**; and **Psalms 104:30**. *In dealing with the Creation of the universe, which is a work of G-d, these three Persons are said to be responsible*.

The Work of the Creation of Man

A second specific work of G-d is the creation of man. *Again, the thrust of Scripture in both testaments is that G-d created man in His own image*. Once again, the Scriptures teach that three different Persons are credited with the creation of man. **The Father** is responsible for the creation of man according to **Genesis 2:7**. **The Son** is responsible for the creation of man according to **Colossians 1:16**. **The Holy Spirit** is responsible for the creation of man in **Job 33:4**. *As it was true with the Creation of the universe, so it is also true with the creation of man: three Persons are credited with this work, which is a work of G-d*.

The Work of Inspiration

The third example is the work of inspiration. *The thrust of Scripture is that G-d does the work of inspiration; G-d is the revealer of Himself*. But again, three different Persons are said to be responsible for the work of inspiration. **G-d the Father** does the work of inspiration according to **II Timothy 3:16**. **The Son** is responsible for the work of inspiration in **I Peter 1:10-11**. **The Holy Spirit** is responsible for the work of inspiration in **II Peter 1:21**. *This, too, is a work of G-d, and yet, three Persons are responsible*.

In summary, the Bible teaches three great truths concerning the G-dhead: **1)** There exists a plurality of personalities within the G-dhead. **2)** The unity of the G-dhead: *the plurality is not a plurality of G-ds as in Polytheism, for there is only one G-d*. **3)** The Trinity of the G-dhead: *the plurality of the personalities of the one G-d is limited to three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, no more and no less*.

CONCLUSION

Finally, for a few minutes... let's sit under the ministry of *Yochanan the beloved disciple*, John the Apostle. *John will cut to the chase, he will tell us what the bottom line truly is.* Let's hear from him how **diabolically dangerous** the denial of this doctrine is.

A young man was busy about his father's business, he stood in a boat on the Sea of Galilee mending the fishing nets. Yeshua saw him, and called him (Mat 4:21). And after decades of being busy about his Heavenly Father's business... *the business of fishing for men, we find John once again mending the nets:*

1 John 2:22-23

Who is THE LIAR but he who denies that Yeshua is the Messiah? This is the ANTI-messiah (meaning the in-place-of, instead-of, adversary, against), he who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son, the same doesn't have the Father. *He who confesses the Son has the Father also.*

Now, the devil hates this truth above everything else and is constantly exerting every wile, every stratagem, every clever ruse he can devise to twist and to distort this basic truth of the Gospel message.

Much of church history is an account of how *haSatan*, in one way or another, has succeeded in taking this basic, fundamental truth of faith and twisted it to make it appear as something else.

What John is combating here is an early form of Gnosticism called Cerinthianism, named after its most prominent spokesman, **Cerinthus**. *This heresy taught that Yeshua was nothing but a man, and at his baptism the Eternal "Messiah Spirit" came upon him to dwell for a season. Since he was only a man, this divine Spirit was the explanation for his amazing ministry. That same Messiah Spirit then left him on the cross, and thus when he was buried he was buried as just a man again, no longer the Messiah.*

Unfortunately the essence of this heresy is still with us today in the teachings of the Christian Science movement as founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821 - 1910). One of the basic claims of Christian Science is that Jesus was a man upon whom the Christ spirit came. But this is what John calls THE LIE.

According to such teaching, Jesus is not THE Christ, he is only possessed by THE Christ. This denies the **incarnation**, the fact announced in John's Gospel that **the word was made flesh**, (John 1:14a KJV).

The truth is, Yeshua is the Messiah, *he is that predicted One whom the OT prophets foresaw.* Yeshua is the *ish et YHVH*, the very **G-d-Man** that *Chavah* thought at she had given birth to, the redeemer who was promised to her and by extension to all humanity.

It was Yeshua who crushed *haSatan's* head, *when He gave Himself in love on the tree, through His death, burial, and BODILY resurrection on the third day.*

The denial of this doctrine **inevitably** leads to a denial of the deity of the Messiah.

In John 14, Yeshua tells T'oma I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. Pilipos says *Lord, show us the Father...* and Yeshua replies *Have I been with you such a long time, and do you not know me, Pilipos? He who has seen me has seen the Father.*

And over and over again throughout John 14, Yeshua emphasizes and re-emphasizes in various ways this supernatural, super-rational, relationship within the G-dhead.

Yeshua says (I'm paraphrasing): *Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me... I will pray to the Father, and he will give you... the Spirit of truth... he will live with you, and will be in you.*

This is what John is referring back to in his epistle. He is saying don't be deceived, don't move away from what Yeshua Himself taught us. *He who confesses the Son has the Father also.*

When we CONFESS (true salvation sense) the Son and are born anew, the fullness of the G-dhead comes to dwell within us in the Person of the Holy Spirit. And what happens? As it says (Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6)... G-d sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and we cry out "**Abba, Father!**"

Whoever denies the Son, the same doesn't have the Father.

In closing, let's scratch at the *metaphysical nature* of this all-important doctrine with the best analogy I have ever come across... one that helped me very much to be at *Shalom* with this issue.

Dr. John Warwich Montgomery

The doctrine of the Trinity is not "irrational"; what IS irrational is to suppress the biblical evidence for Trinity in favor of Unity, or the evidence for Unity in favor of Trinity. Our data must take precedence over our models -- or, stating it better, our models must sensitively reflect the full range of data.

A close analogy to the theologian's procedure here lies in the work of the theoretical physicist: Subatomic entities are found, on examination, to possess wave properties (W), particle properties (P), and quantum properties (h). Though these characteristics are in many respects incompatible (particles don't diffract, while waves do, etc.), physicists "explain" or "model" an electron as **PWh**. They have to do this in order to give proper weight to all the relevant data.

Likewise the theologian who speaks of G-d as "Three in One." Neither the scientist nor the theologian expects you get a "picture" by way of his model; the purpose of the model is to help you take into account *all* of the facts, instead of perverting reality through superimposing an apparent "consistency" on it. The choice is clear: either the Trinity or a "G-d" who is only a pale imitation of the Lord of biblical and confessional Christianity.