

SUMMARY: The concept of the Trinity as is commonly understood (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit having equal power and glory) is not stated within nor supported by the scriptures.

IMPACT: This is understood not to be a “faith” issue. We may not and probably will not have a common understanding of this subject when this discussion is over. It is simply a subject for basic understanding.

The term Trinity is not found in the scriptures, but is a concept to attempt to describe the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It may well be an attempt to rationalize that we are a mono-theistic religion with three persons in the Godhead.

DEFINITION: Trinity (*TRIN uh tih*), is a term used of God to express the belief that in the one God there are three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost). The idea of trinity is drawn from the teachings of Christ as recorded in the New Testament. Belief in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was first defined by the earliest general council of churches. This was the first Council of Nicaea in 325. This council declared that the Son is of the same substance as the Father. The East and West branches of the church later disagreed as to how the Holy Spirit proceeds from the other divine Persons. The Eastern Church held that the Son comes from the Father and the Spirit comes from the Father through the Son. The Western Church held that the Spirit comes from the Father and Son together. Most Christians believe that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have equal power and glory. Each has His own activity. The Father creates; the Son saves souls, and the Spirit makes holy. (Fulton J. Sheen and Mervin Monroe Deems, The World Book Encyclopedia, 1973)

DISCUSSION: In this study, we have previously looked at the individual subjects of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to prepare ourselves to study the composite subject of the Trinity.

As has been seen in the previous sections, the Father is clearly the dominant part of the godhead, with the Son and the Holy Spirit being subservient to Him. As the equality of the three to make “one God” is the basis of the Trinity, the Trinity concept would not be valid.

We have “one God” in the sense that we have one everlasting (from an eternal past to eternal future) member of the deity, but there are other members of the deity.

VERSES USED TO SUPPORT THE TRINITY CONCEPT:

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

Response: No one is questioning that Jesus is god.

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "**God with us.**"

Response: No one is questioning that Jesus is god.

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (NAS)

Response: Clearly a prophecy about Jesus. The portion which would give some pause are:

"Eternal Father": The is Eternal Father rather than the Father. To make this the Father would be an interpretation. An equally valid interpretation would be that the church is Christ's bride making him the husband or father in the family. We are born into that family in baptism, making Jesus our father.

"Mighty God": No question but that Jesus is a god, the only question is whether he is within the sense of the Trinity definition.

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (NAS)

Response: Mentions that all three exist which we all agree upon. Does not teach they exist in the form of the definition of the Trinity.

1 John 4:9 NASB "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only **begotten** Son into the world so that we might live through Him. (NAS)

Response: Logic is all things came into being through him and Jehovah spoke all things into existence, so Jesus was/is the word of Jehovah. Still short of the Trinity concept.

The following verses have been recently suggested to support the concept of the Trinity by an experienced preacher. Romans 8:9-11 (NASV) However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Response: States that the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ both dwell in you which can be interpreted that they are two separate spirits or potentially one spirit doing two things. At the very least it is difficult to interpret and should be interpreted in accordance with more specific statements available.

In the lesson 8.3 on The Son there are about a dozen verses showing an inequality between Jesus and Jehovah, such as John 14:28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away,

and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." (NAS)

Verses such as John 14:28 are specific statements whereas Isaiah 9:6, John 14:26, John 1:1-3 and Romans 8:9-11 are broader statements subject to interpretation. It is not appropriate to interpret specific statements in accordance with your personal interpretation of a broad statement. It is appropriate to interpret broad statements in accordance with the specific statements.