

Fundamentals of Christian  
Faith  
'Back to Basics Series'  
LHM 2008

**01: The Doctrine of The Trinity**  
**Sept 28, 2008**

# Defining Trinity - 1

- The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons- -the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Stated differently, God is one in **essence** and three in **person**.
- Wayne Grudem's [Systematic Theology](#) defines the Trinity as follows: *“God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God”* (p. 226).

# Defining Trinity - 2

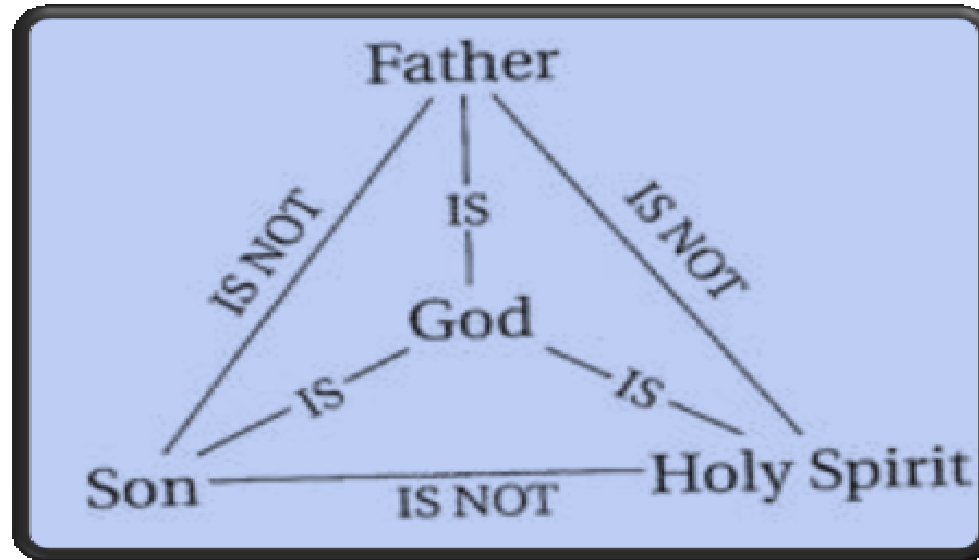
- ❖ Broken down, this amounts to three propositions:
  - i. God is three persons.*
  - ii. Each person is fully God*
  - iii. There is one God*
- when we say “**God is three persons,**” we mean that He is not just one person, and that the persons of the Trinity are not to be confused.

# Defining Trinity - 3

**So we can also say:**

- ✓ The Father is God.
- ✓ The Son is God.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit is God.
- ✓ The Father is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ The Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son.

# The Doctrine of The Trinity



Figure

# ***The father, son, and holy spirit are distinct persons.***

- The Bible speaks of the Father as God ([Phil. 1:2](#)), Jesus as God ([Titus 2:13](#)), and the Holy Spirit as God ([Acts 5:3-4](#)).

## **Question:**

Are these just three different ways of looking at God, or simply ways of referring to three different roles that God plays?

# ***The father, son, and holy spirit are distinct persons***

- The answer must be NO, because the Bible also indicates that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons
- Examples:
- ([John 3:16](#)), Father sent Son into the World
- ([John 16:10](#)), Son returned to the Father
- ([John 14:26](#); [Acts 2:33](#)), Father & Son sent HS into the World.
- ([Mark 1:10-11](#), At the baptism of Jesus ...

## ***Each Person is Fully God.***

**Q:** If God is three Persons, does this mean that each Person is "one-third" of God? Does the Trinity mean that God is divided into three parts?

**A:** The Trinity does not divide God into three parts. The Bible is clear that all three Persons are each one hundred percent God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all fully God.

E.g. ([Colossians 2:9](#)). "in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (speaking of Christ)

# *There Is Only One God*

Q: If each Person of the Trinity is distinct and yet fully God, then should we conclude that there is more than one God?

A: Obviously we cannot, for Scripture is clear that there is only one God: *"There is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other"* ([Isaiah 45:21-22](#)); see also [44:6-8](#); [Exodus 15:11](#); [Deuteronomy 4:35](#); [6:4-5](#); [32:39](#); [1 Samuel 2:2](#); [1 Kings 8:60](#)

# Is The Trinity Contradictory?

- it is not a contradiction for God to be both three and one because He is not three and one in the same way. He is three in a different way than He is one.
- **How is God one? He is one in essence.**
- **How is God three? He is three in Person.**
- **Essence** and **Person** are not the same thing. God is one in a certain way (**essence**) and three in a different way (**person**).

# Is The Trinity Contradictory?

- Since God is one in a different way than He is three, the Trinity is not a contradiction. There would only be a contradiction if we said that God is three in the same way that He is one.
- **ESSENCE**: means the same thing as “**being**”. God's essence is **His being**. To be even more precise, essence is “what you are”.

- ***PERSON:***
- What we do mean by Person is something that regards himself as "I" and others as "You." So the Father, for example, is a different Person from the Son because He regards the Son as a "You," even though He regards Himself as "I." Thus, in regards to the Trinity, we can say that "Person" means a distinct subject which regards Himself as an "I" and the other two as a "You." These distinct subjects are not a division within the being of God, but "a form of personal existence other than a difference in being." [3]

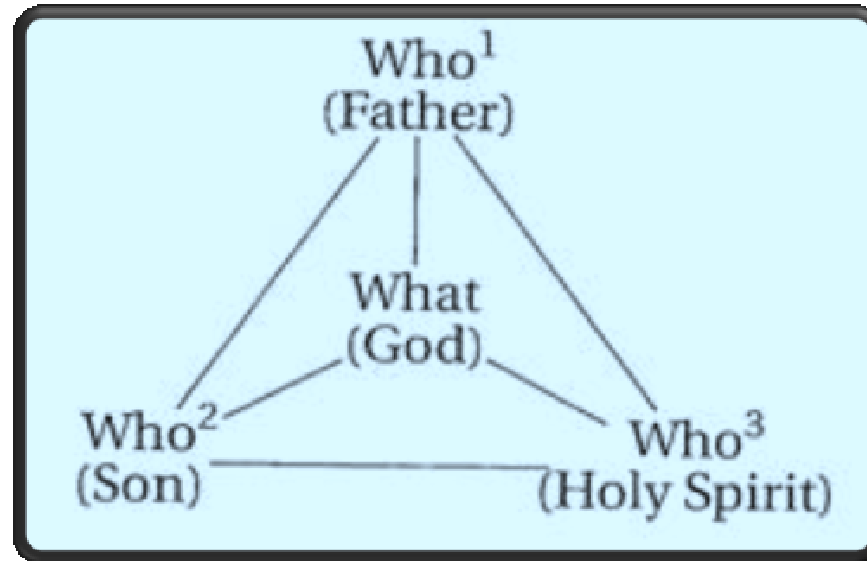
## ***How Do They Relate?***

- The relationship between Essence and Person, then, is as follows. Within God's one, undivided being is an "unfolding" into three personal distinctions. These personal distinctions are modes of existence within the divine being, but are not divisions of the divine being. They are personal forms of existence other than a difference in being

# ***How Do They Relate?***

- ***Norman Geisler*** explained it as follows:  
***while Essence is what you are, Person is who you are. So God is one "What" but three "Whos."***
- The divine essence is thus not something that exists "above" or "separate from" the three Persons, but **the divine essence is the being of the three Persons.**

# The Doctrine of The Trinity



# There is only One God

- “. . . the LORD is God; there is no other besides him” (Deut. 4:35).
- “. . . there is no god beside me” (Deut. 32:39).
- “. . . you alone are God” (Ps 86:10).
- “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me” (Isa. 43:10).
- “I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God” (Isa. 45:5).
- “. . . the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God” (1 Tim. 1:17).
- “. . . there is one God” (1 Tim. 2:5).

# All other gods are demonic false gods.

- “. . . the only true God” (John 17:3).
- “They sacrificed to demons that were no gods” (Deut. 32:17).
- “. . . what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons” (1 Cor. 10:20).

# The Father is God.

- “God the Father” (John 6:27).
- “. . . there is one God, the Father” (1 Cor. 8:6).

# The Son is God.

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14).
- “Truly, truly, I [Jesus] say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).
- “Thomas answered him [Jesus], ‘My Lord and my God!’” (John 20:28).
- “. . . Christ who is God over all” (Rom. 9:5).
- “. . . our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).
- “. . . Jesus Christ. He is the true God” (1 John 5:20).

# The Spirit is God.

- Note: It must be stressed that the Spirit is a “he” and not an “it.” The Spirit is not an impersonal force, but rather a person who can be grieved (Eph. 4:30), resisted (Acts 7:51), and outraged (Heb. 10:29).

# The Spirit is God.

- **(2 Cor. 3:17–18)** – **The Lord is Spirit**
- **(Acts 5:3–4)** – lie to the HS. . . not lied to man but to God
- **1 Cor 2:10-11** – Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God
- **1 Cor 3:16** – you are a temple of God, the Spirit dwells in you

# Additionally

*The echoes of the Trinity in the early pages of Genesis also make sense:*

- “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:1–2).

# Additionally

- “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” (Gen. 1:26).
- “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us’” (Gen. 3:22).
- “And the LORD said . . . ‘Come, let us . . .’” (Gen. 11:6–7).

## and Lastly ...

**Two great verses on the Trinity in the Old Testament that apply directly to the incarnation of Jesus:**

- “And now the Lord GOD [Father] has sent me [Jesus], and his Spirit” (Isa. 48:16).
- “The Spirit of the Lord GOD [Father] is upon me [Jesus], because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (Isa. 61:1).