

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Raising the issue of a Triune God is often the basis for an accusation that we either worship multiple gods or we have added an alien concept to Scripture. To the contrary, it is one of the most wonderful doctrines we have. It describes the fundamental relationship that we share with each other in the Body of Christ, and that married couples share with each other in matrimony. It is a relationship in which a multiplicity of persons acts as one in identity, purpose and character.

When we baptize, we do so in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That is, our authority to baptize is grounded in all three persons without distinction. It is not done by the authority of three names, but by that one name which references all three simultaneously. When we pray, we pray *to* the Father, *through* the Son, and *by* the Holy Spirit. This highlights the distinctiveness of each person in the Godhead. This linguistic exercise emphasizes the fact that there is only *one* God who has himself provided us with access to his presence. He has done so by sacrificing his eternal relationship with His only Son for a time. Christ divorces himself from his Father as God becomes flesh to walk among his people. And yet, God has not ceased to be God, nor is His heavenly throne left vacant. Hebrews explains that God's purpose in taking on a human nature was,

- to share our fleshly weakness to gain fuller compassion for us (2:18, 4:15),
- to uphold the righteousness of His Father's law by his perfect obedience even in that weakness (2:14-17),
- to more fully reveal His Father to us that we might know God as Abraham knows God (6:17, 8:10-11), *and*
- to demonstrate God's unconditional and boundless love for us by offering us forgiveness for our sins without merit (9:15, 10:14, 11:6, 12:2).

However, in our state of sin we have no power or ability to reach out to Him or to accept His offer of forgiveness, and so He empowers us by His Spirit to respond to His love. His Spirit circumcises our ears and our hearts and resides in us to bring us to the Father, not by coercion but by enabling us to *know* the Father. Knowing who God is draws us to Him in itself. This process is known as effectual calling. It is a unified process that cannot be parceled out or diminished any more than God can be parceled out or diminished.

The controversy inherent in the doctrine of the Trinity usually stems from too much emphasis on the *unity* of the Godhead vis-à-vis the *plurality* of the Godhead. There has never been and will never be an adequate statement of it. We cannot say God is One if we mean to make Christ out to be God's creature. Nor can we say God is Three if we mean to diminish God's nature. God is three in one, and He is one in three, and He is uniformly and eternally One without any inconsistency or conflict in those statements. None of that is meant to be a play on words nor is it a mere word game. It is a poor attempt to use human language to describe a non-human Truth that is portrayed in Scripture as a reality. Arguments about the Trinity have been going on since the Arian controversy of 318 AD. Hilary wrote this about the Trinity in 356 AD (paraphrased), "All language is powerless to express what is to be said... Words do not portray the subject as it is. Analogies, while necessary, are inadequate. We have to look for certain resemblances in inferior things, but in reality there is no comparison between earthly things and God. An analogy

is more useful to man than appropriate to God. It hints at the meaning rather than explaining it fully. Taken strictly, it will mislead instead of helping.”

Jesus Christ is both Man *and* God in all the fullness of meaning that can be attached to each of those natures, and He is completely so without conflict between the two. How that is possible is a mystery to our minds, but it is demonstrably true from the pages of Scripture. The Holy Spirit is not God-in-action, a mere force, but a person with all the attributes normally associated with personhood. This too is demonstrably true from the pages of Scripture (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Ac 5:3; Eph 4:30; 1Th 5:19). We want God to say that Christ is either man or God, and God responds that *both* are true. We want God to say that His Spirit is either power or person, and again He responds that *both* are true. We want God to say that Christ is either God incarnate or He is the Son of God. And once more God responds that *both* are true.

Here’s an example of why the Trinity is so difficult to explain. If I say that Christ is my Savior, and I say that God is my Savior, both could be true but I would be saying nothing about the Trinity. The relationship of Savior is ambiguous: if I am a prisoner of war and the President sends a Navy Seal to rescue me, which is my savior? Without the presidential order, the Navy Seal never comes to my rescue, and without the Navy Seal, the presidential order is worthless. Both are necessary and both are my savior. But I cannot say the President and the Navy Seal are the same being. When we speak of the Trinity that’s exactly what we’re saying. If the president was a Navy Seal, and as a Navy Seal he personally rescued me, I would not be inconsistent if, after he became President I said, “The President rescued me.” But in such an instance I cannot say the President and the Navy Seal are two different persons, nor two different beings. I might say the President performed two different roles. But when we speak of the Trinity we are in fact saying there are two different persons, and we are not saying the same person performed two different roles and we are not saying there are two different beings. To the unbelieving mind that is sheer nonsense. Let’s say the Navy Seal is a mental patient with multiple personalities, Tom, Dick and Harry. While he is “Tom” he rescues me. Can I say that Dick rescued me? That’s the issue. Let’s say Dick is afraid of water and cannot qualify as a Navy Seal. It’s not in his nature to do the rescue. So the answer is “no.” We cannot say Dick rescued me. None of this is to say that God is a mental case, nor to speak of Him with less than full reverence and fear, but it illustrates the difficulty of articulating a clear explanation of the Trinity.

As far as the Reformed Faith is concerned, how do we normally state the doctrine of the Trinity? The Westminster Confession of Faith describes it this way (in updated language), “In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, having one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” The PCA version of the Westminster Confession offers these Scripture proofs: (1 John 5:7; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). Here’s the original King James version for 1 John 5:7.

1JO 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Here is a New International Version translation of 1 John 5:7 with the surrounding verses.

1JO 5:6-9 This is the one who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For

there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

Notice it doesn't clearly support the Trinity, nor would the NASB. There is no conflict between the two. But the King James states expressly what the NIV only hints at. There are three witnesses to the identity of Jesus Christ and they are the Holy Spirit, God the Father, and Christ himself (water and blood). They all agree that he is the Son of the Living God and by inference that identifies him with God. See the trial of Christ in Matt. 26:62-65 in which such a statement is called blasphemy, a misuse of the name of God because it equates a man with God Himself.

The other two passages cited as textual proofs for the Trinity are less troublesome. They indicate an equivalent authority between Christ and the Father, and distinct roles between the Persons of the Godhead. In the Matthew passage, baptizing is done "in the name of" to secure the necessary authority. "Name" is singular and used only once. This seems to mean the authority is equally shared among those mentioned.

MAT 28:19 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,

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

In the 5th century, Augustine explained this tension between unity and plurality using the analogy of a *speaker*, what is *spoken*, and the act of *speaking*. He was referring to the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively. These are identifiably different things, but the speaker, what he says, and how he says it all flow from who he is as a being. Augustine also tried the analogy of a lover, the one loved, and love itself. Both models break down under scrutiny, but it was a start for the discussion that ensued and that has continued for centuries.

The next part of the Westminster Confession reads, "*The Father exists. He is not generated and does not come from any source. The Son is eternally generated from the Father.*" The textual proof offered is (John 1:14,18). Notice that the "One and Only" is called "God" but comes from the Father and resides at the Father's side.

The Word *became* flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came *from* the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God, but *God* the One and Only, who is *at* the Father's side, has made him known.

The final part of the Westminster Confession dealing with the Trinity says, "*and the Holy Spirit eternally comes from the Father and the Son* (John 15:26; Gal. 4:6). Note that in the supporting Scriptural passages Christ sends the Spirit from the Father, as if given the authority to do so. Not only does Christ send the Spirit, but the Father sends the Spirit as well. The nature of this relationship between Christ, the Spirit, and the Father is a mystery, but it exists and this is about as clear as it gets:

JOH 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will *send* to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out *from* the Father, he will testify about me."

GAL 4:6 Because you are sons, God *sent* the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”

The scripture proofs allude to the concept of the Trinity, justifying the statements made in the Confession, but they do not fully quench our curiosity about the doctrine. There are historical precedents for defining the Trinity as we find it in the Confession, and we will examine some of the great debates in church history concerning the Trinity at the end of this lecture series.

We want to do more than merely review history or justify a doctrine. We want to demonstrate that this doctrine of the Trinity is not only alluded to in Scripture, but that it is fundamental to knowing God. And knowing God is central to our lives as Christians; it is the very purpose for which God has called us. What sorts of passages would help us in this quest to know God?

A PROOF FOR THE TRINITY

We cannot point to the word “Trinity” in Scripture, nor can we point to any passages clearly describing the doctrine itself. But that does not mean there is no Scriptural basis for the doctrine. What sorts of biblical events or relationships would we need to find in order to conclude that God does exist in three persons? Let’s establish the following four criteria for the types of passages we are searching for, and which we have to assume are not contradictory:

1. Alternative passages which speak of the plurality of the Godhead, and the unity of the Godhead. Such passages would indicate that the issue is not whether God is One or Three, but whether God is One and Three at the same time.
2. Alternative passages that describe a unique act performed by more than one of the persons in the Godhead. These indicate that the unique act is a shared and simultaneous event on the part of these persons. It identifies each person involved in the event as the same being. Bestowing life would qualify as a unique act, for example.
3. Alternative passages which describe the same unique relationship between us and two or more of the persons in the Godhead. A biological parent has a unique relationship with its child. In the common sense of the phrase, we can refer to a male parent as a father even when the person is not the biological source of the child referred to. But we cannot refer to a non-biological father as the source of hemophilia in that child. That relationship is unique. If two or more persons in the Godhead have such a unique relationship with us, they can only have it if they are one and the same being. The relationship of forgiver and forgiven would be unique because forgiveness comes only from the one against whom we sinned, regardless of who conveys that pardon. Did Christ forgive or did he simply convey forgiveness?
4. Alternative passages which distinguish the functional activities of the three persons in the Godhead, and yet refer to two or more persons of the Godhead performing the same functional activity. If the Father is our Creator, and the Son is our Creator, and the Holy Spirit is our Creator, and God is our Creator, are we talking about a heavenly R&D team that built a human habitat, or are we in fact discussing the very same Heavenly Being who brought a universe into existence by His word?

Read those again. Make sure you understand what they are describing and why they will be effective. If we can find passages that satisfy each of the four criteria, then we may reasonably say that Scripture teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. The only other rational explanation for satisfying these criteria might be that the Bible is somehow self-contradicting and therefore untrustworthy. Because this explanation is unacceptable and unsupportable, we must assume that the explanation for the seeming inconsistency is resolved on a higher plane. We can worship a Triune God even if we cannot understand how such a being functions.

A Note on Scriptural Interpretation

Whenever we begin a search of the Scriptures to learn its teachings on a particular topic, we must be circumspect in our approach, recognizing that it is the Word of God, Holy in its composition, and worthy of respect. We must be scrupulous to avoid justifying our pre-conceived notions by finding only passages that support our beliefs and ignoring those which speak against them. To help us in this science of Hermeneutics (a way of knowledge) there are certain principles which we must never compromise. In brief, they go like this,

1. There is a *known* speaker in the Bible.
2. There is a *known* audience in the Bible.
3. The events occur at a *known* time in history.
4. The words used are in a *known* language.
5. From these facts we may deduce from Scripture
 - a. *Principles* of life,
 - b. *Knowledge* of God, or
 - c. *Rules* of behavior.
6. We may apply such principles, knowledge or rules to how we live *today*.
7. Where passages seem to conflict we may deduce the correct meaning by
 - a. using detailed passages to control general passages
 - b. using numerous passages to control exceptional ones
 - c. using related passages to explain each other
 - d. assuming Scripture is infallible while we are not
 - e. never going beyond what is written
8. We must read individual passages of Scripture in context, and that context is always the *whole* of Scripture.
9. God's Word is living Spirit and as such it has, during our personal devotions and our corporate worship, an adaptive and purposeful message for us based on our current needs and

our current ability to grasp its import. It must therefore be approached reverently, with prayer and a servant's heart, for it is God who speaks to us there.

10. There is a certain historicity to God's Word; many mighty men and women of God have contributed to its understanding. We must not lightly cast aside an established Truth of Scripture in favor of our own interpretation.

In large part, the appropriate passages of Scripture will be presented by topic, letting the passages speak for themselves. Trying to put the concept of Trinity into clear language is a near-impossible task. Perhaps allowing God to suggest what it is through His Word is the most effective way to convey its meaning and its importance to us. God reveals Himself to us, but through a glass darkly. It is a reflection of who He is, as seen through human eyes, with a limited human intellect, and a corrupted nature.

Plurality vs. Unity

Plurality in the Godhead

The Bible contains general references to the plurality of the Godhead and to the varying manifestations of God in the sight of men. In the first three verses of Genesis we find a passage that declares God is the Creator and the Spirit of God is his agent. God spoke and the universe came into being by his Spirit.

GEN 1:1-3 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

As straightforward as this may seem, in the third verse of John we read that Christ is the author of creation. The mystery of the relationship of Son to Father and Son to Holy Spirit is the basis on which the doctrine of the Trinity is derived. Either the Father is the Creator or the Son is the creator, but both cannot be the creator unless they are both the same being.

JOH 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

JOH 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

In the same way that Father and Son share their role as Creator, God's Spirit is a co-participant in creation. For example, Man himself is the product of the out-workings of God's will through his Holy Spirit. The identity of character and purpose between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is reflected in these Old Testament passages. The use of the words "we" and "us" is not meant as a royal "we." The original language indicates it is 2 or more persons. It is conceivable that it refers to the heavenly host, but the point to look for here is that *God* made us, and the *Spirit* made us, and we are like *them*.

GEN 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all

the creatures that move along the ground.” So *God* created man in his *own* image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

JOB 33:4 The *Spirit* of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

GEN 3:22 And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of *us*, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

Because the Holy Spirit is probably the least understood of the persons in the Godhead, let’s examine some passages which illuminate His ministry. Even in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was efficacious in the lives of His faithful ones, in-filling and empowering His people to carry out His will. The Holy Spirit is the conveyor of God’s words and thoughts to man. To be invested with the Holy Spirit is to be counseled by God himself. To act on the guidance of the Holy Spirit displays to others the wonders of the mind and character of God in thought, word, skill or duty. Thus, we reveal God to others as He reveals Himself to us, but only as we act out His will.

GEN 41:38-39 So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.

EXO 31:3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts -

ISA 10:10 When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying.

ISA 11:6 When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger.

2CH 24:20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, “This is what God says: ‘Why do you disobey the LORD’S commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.’”

EZE 11:24 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me,

God not only conveys his will by His Spirit, but His Spirit represents him in the world.

ISA 63:11 Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people - where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them,

The Holy Spirit is the guarantor of our salvation meaning He does not have a *passive* ministry, but an *active* one in which He brings to fruition the will of God in each one of us.

2 COR 1:21-22 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 COR 5:5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

EPH. 1:14 Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory.

Now having examined the ministry of the Holy Spirit in part, let's look at whether this ministry is overlapped by another in the Godhead. We said that the Holy Spirit is the conveyor of God's will to us. In Peter's first epistle we read,

1PE 1:10,11 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Who is this "Spirit of Christ" as opposed to the Spirit of God? Is this phrase used elsewhere in Scripture? As a matter of fact, it is:

PHI 1:19 Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

ACT 16:7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

ROM 8:9 And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Now we have to ask whether there are two Spirits or only one. If there are two, then perhaps we have a plurality – if there is only one, then we have unity. But if they are one and the same in two persons, then we have a Trinity. Scripture clearly says there is only one. Remember the rule of interpretation: the specific passage overrules the general passage.

EPH 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1CO 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

If we are indwelt by only one Spirit who is from God Almighty, then we must reconcile these passages by concluding the Spirit is the same in these passages. He is God and He is Christ and they are in fact the same being. Can we find a passage that addresses that specific point? Try these two,

2CO 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

EPH 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Romans 8:29 makes it clear that we are being conformed to the image of his Son, and it is therefore understood in the first passage above that Christ and the Spirit are the same being referred to. Yet, they are not the same because we read in Romans that the Spirit raised Jesus,

ROM 8:11 And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus [the man] from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Jesus had the authority not only to lay down his life but to take it up again. That is, he had the authority to raise *himself* from the dead. Apparently, both the Spirit and Christ raised him from the dead. And the Father commanded this. It also appears that the resurrection is a *unique act* performed by two *different* persons. That satisfies criterion #2 in our test.

JOHN 10:17-18 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

Let's continue with the idea in Romans that God lives among (or within) his people. Note that the passages below portray the suffering servant as being sent by God. Then the very same passage declares that God himself will live among his people. Does God send someone, or is God himself coming? The combined passages indicate both are true. They only hint of the nature of the Trinity, but they do indicate the existence of more than one person whenever God is about to do a mighty work in the lives of His people. God makes a promise to live among his people Himself, and not just to place his Spirit among them as we have in Isaiah 63:11 above. His Spirit, His servant, and God Himself were coming to live among his people.

ZEC 2:8-9 For this is what the LORD Almighty says: “After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you – for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye – I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me.

Who is this one that is sent by God? And why does the very next verse seem to say that it is God who is coming to live among his people and not just someone He sent? Are they the same? If not, how are we to explain this? We have seen Christ, we have His Spirit (Rom. 8:9), but where is God if they are not the same one spoken of here?

ZEC 2:10 “Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the LORD.

ZEC 2:11 “Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.”

Often, our initial response to such a statement is, which is it? Will God come, or will his servant? And as usual God responds with “YES.” Lastly, if there are no other persons in the Godhead, why does Christ in the book of Matthew specify shared (but not divided) authority to baptize?

MAT 28:19 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,

Unity in the Godhead

Now that we have reviewed just a few passages addressing the multiplicity of the Godhead, we will explore other passages addressing the *unity* of the Godhead. Then we will look at a few that illustrate some of the distinctions in the Godhead. In the Luke passage below, we are told that God himself has come to us when we have only seen Jesus of Nazareth.

LUK 19:44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

Christ clearly establishes a tautology in his relationship with the Father in the book of Matthew and again in John. Even more mystifying is the extension of that relationship to us.

JOH 14:20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Here are two passages contrasting each of the three persons of the Godhead. We will review other passages shortly which alternately contrast each of two persons of the Godhead in greater detail.

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

1PE 1:2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

These scriptures highlight another aspect of Jesus Christ. Fundamental to the *Doctrine of the Trinity* is the recognition of the dual nature of Christ, his divinity and his humanity. We want to look at both of those natures now to ponder how the nature of the Trinity imbues the process of our salvation with the very presence of God Himself.

The Dual Nature of Christ

Christ is fully God and fully man. This is not just a mantra that we recite to end any arguments over whether he is one or the other. He is *both*. The dual nature of Christ speaks directly to this issue of whether God can exist in several persons and still be one being. If we can show from Scripture that Christ is *both*, then we have opened the possibility that God is *three*. If

Christ was not God, then God's promise to live among his people has not been fulfilled, and we never knew Him (Ez. 37:27, John 10:14). If Christ was not a man, then he never suffered as we suffer, he was never tempted as we are tempted, and therefore his sacrifice never atoned for our sins, because he never really knew us or stood in our stead (Isa. 53:2-6). You need to grasp how crucial the Trinity is to everything we believe about Christ and what he accomplished on the cross. Understanding the mechanism of it, the exact meaning of it, will only be known when we pass out of this realm and into God's presence. But we know enough to stand on it in faith.

A little book was written many years ago about a creature who lived in a two-dimensional world on a single plane (*Flatland* by Edwin Abbott, 1884). In the flavor of the book, let's say one day he saw a point appear on the street before him. It became a line growing in opposite directions until it ran the length of the street. Suddenly it vanished from sight. All the creatures who saw it were trying to explain the phenomenon but simply didn't have the words to express it. What they had seen was a visitor from a three-dimensional realm. A triangle had intersected their plane at the point of its apex. It continued to move through the plane, past its base, exiting completely out the other side. The creatures of the plane knew of circles, lines, and triangles. But they had no idea at all there was another dimension from which a triangle could come. Christ's nature is like that to us.

The Divinity of Christ

This section contains passages on Christ's divinity. Christ was worshipped by his followers and declared himself to be the embodiment of God. John said he was with the father in the beginning, an eternal being! Let's begin by discussing John 1:14,

The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son [or the Only Begotten Son] who came from the Father...

This particular verse is often mistranslated (as indicated in the brackets) and such renderings lend credence to groups like Jehovah's Witnesses who deny the Trinity and insist that Jesus Christ is a created being rather than the eternal God incarnate. The Greek word used in the text is "monogenes" which literally means single-generation. It is best translated as "unique" or as it is in the NIV above, the "only Son." The Westminster Confession doesn't help our understanding any because it uses "eternally begotten," an oxymoron. Something is either eternal or it is begotten. Eternal means there was never a time when it did not exist and therefore it could not *come* into existence. To beget is to sire or produce or cause to exist. Generate has the same meaning as beget. It's no wonder we have arguments over the meanings of the words or translations of the passages. Hilary responded to the Arian argument that "begotten" or "became" indicates something came from nothing. He said first that you cannot use reason and philosophy as a foundation for truth. Only God's Word should be used. He explained that God – one, living, and eternal – is born of God. The Son *appeared* in the flesh; he wasn't created. He was pre-existing and eternal. Hilary coined the word "incarnation" to explain this appearance. The Greek word for "became" implies that something which already exists passes through something to become a new form, like clay in a mold, or water in an ice-tray. Its substance has not changed, only its appearance. This is fine for the unity of the Godhead, but not the plurality of it.

Let's put it in context with the passage instead of trying to assess it on its own. John also calls Christ "the Word," or in the Greek "Logos," which was a *known* philosophical concept (remember the rules of interpretation). The Greeks believed that the underlying force of the universe, the concept upon which all existence rests is this entity called "Logos." John is attempting to explain to the Greeks that Jesus Christ is the *Logos*, an embodiment of a philosophical concept, a tangible representation of what the Greeks knew only as an intangible theory (a known author writing to a known audience about a known subject).

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

There are several things to note about the grammar of this sentence before we can determine its meaning. The phrase "*and the Word was God*" in the Greek text uses a proper pronoun for "God" and it cannot be translated as "a god." The other point is the phrase "was with God" uses the Greek "*pros*" for with. There are two other possible "with's" that could have been used by the writer: *sun* (meaning among) or *meta* (meaning side by side). Neither was used. Instead "*pros*" which means "face to face" was used in contra-distinction. So, *the Word* was not part of a group, and *the Word* was not alongside God. *The Word* was face to face with God. John has explicitly said that the Word *was* God. He then speaks of an all-encompassing entity known to the Greek world as "Logos," and he identifies Christ with that concept. He cannot then logically or linguistically negate the first two paragraphs, which speak of the cohesiveness and indivisibility of the Logos (and God), by intending "monogenes" to mean separate and distinct from God. Let's try a bit of imagery to make this easier to understand.

Imagine a pyramid made of mirrors. We have three triangles, each with a mirrored face. The mirrors face inward toward each other, and they are bonded together as a single entity. Each of the three faces always reflects the other two faces so that (like the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) they are never out of each other's sight. In fact, they see an infinitely generated corridor in each other. You can experience that if you place two mirrors opposite each other and stand between. Each face is different, but each is only part of the whole. Looking at this pyramid from outside, we can never see all three of the external faces at the same time, nor can we see any of the infinitely (eternally) generated corridors that exist within. *Hmmm*. Maybe there is something to that Greek word "monogenes" after all. Maybe something can be eternal and still be generated...

Let me try just one more image to help you grasp this idea of being of one substance but having three distinct identities or personalities. Jesus says in John 17 that He and the Father are One. He prays that we might have that same oneness or unity. He goes on to say that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. He then asks that He might be in us as well. The whole of the 14th chapter speaks of us remaining in Him. Is this merely metaphorical or is He actually revealing a fundamental truth about His relationship to the Father and to us. How can all of us be in each other? And how does the Holy Spirit fit into this? I'll discuss this again in the section, "Who lives in us?" below. But for now, imagine you are standing by the ocean with two empty plastic buckets, one large, one small. You step out into the ocean and submerge the large bucket in the water so that it fills with seawater. Has the ocean ceased to be the ocean now that you have contained some of it in your bucket? No. Is the water that is in your bucket any different than the water that is outside your bucket? No. Do they both contain the same substance? Yes. Can you identify the water in your bucket distinctly from the rest of the ocean? Yes, you can: pull your bucket out of the water. Now place the small bucket inside the large bucket so that it fills

with the seawater in the bucket. Can the same be said of these two buckets that was said of the ocean and the large bucket? Yes. Place both buckets back into the ocean. Is the ocean in the buckets? Yes. Are the buckets in the ocean? Yes. So what's the problem with the Trinity? We *can* conceive of it by inference from similar but inadequate objects. Does it seem less improbable now?

I need to take a moment to address two ancient heresies: *adoptionism* and *modalism*. I already talked about the necessity for the dual nature of Christ. Adoptionists and modalists deny his dual nature. Adoptionists say that God adopted a man for his son and merely influenced him with His power. They reject the incarnation. The Son was man but not God. Modalists say God only takes on different forms, or modes of operation. For them, the Son was God, but not man. These things are deceits. Using the bucket analogy, it would be like saying that the qualities or personality of the water in the bucket is no different than the personality of the ocean as a whole. It has only changed its shape to conform to the bucket. That is not true, and that is *not* what the Trinity is about. There are distinct persons in the godhead with mutually dependent sentience, intentionality, and love. The substance of the persons in the godhead may be the same, but those persons are not identical. God did not simply change his appearance. The Holy Spirit is not simply God's energy at work. And Jesus was not simply a man. It is more like comparing the ocean as a whole to its ability to sustain life, or comparing the way it rolls to the effect it has on us when it catches the light at sunset. A shoal is not the same as the raging sea, even though they touch one another and share their waters. The distinction is more about the ocean's qualities and its effects than it is about its components. We can dip the bucket in the ocean, but we cannot say the bucket *is* the ocean. We cannot say the bucket and the ocean do not affect each other. And we cannot say the bucket is empty. That's all I'm going to say about it. As I said earlier, no analogy can do God justice.

Returning to Christ's divinity, it is curious to note the animosity that Christ elicited from the Sanhedrin when he told a blind man that his sins were forgiven. This is a unique function. Only the offended party can forgive the offender. When Joseph resisted Potiphar's wife he said, "*How then could I do such a wicked things and sin against God?*" (Gen. 39:9). Sin is defined by the law. Paul said if there had been no law, there would have been no sin. The law comes from God. Therefore, when we sin we sin only against God. David confirmed that when he said, "*Against You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.*" (Psalm 51:4) Now, it is possible to send a messenger to let someone know that you have forgiven them. We would expect the messenger to say, "My master says you are forgiven" rather than say directly, "I forgive you." How about the existential, "You are forgiven" where we don't know who has done the forgiving? Naturally that's the format Christ used in Mark 2:6-11,

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

The teachers understood full well that Christ was performing a function reserved to God alone. In fact, Jesus reads their minds (i.e. he knows what is in their hearts – by the way, that is reserved to God - Ps.7:9; 139:23). And he answers their unstated objections:

“Which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...”

This is a great passage because it makes the process of forgiveness clear. Jesus has been given the authority to speak for God. Every other prophet said, “*Thus says the Lord*” but Christ never did. He spoke the words of God directly. So this is not someone who has been merely authorized to represent God, but he acts and speaks in God’s stead (John 3:34). Welcome to the *Incarnation* (John 1:14).

Is this different than what happens when Christ bestows that same authority on us? “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matt 16:19 NIV) I believe it is different. When he gives us “the keys” he doesn’t turn us into gods. We will have what we “ask for,” not what we ordain (John 15:7). We are constrained to ask for it in his name, not on our own authority (John 14:14), and it will be done by *Christ*, not by us. In Matthew 18:19, Christ says it will be done by his *Father*, another instance of shared power and authority. Now here is that power being limited, “I will ask the Father...” (John 14:16). The same, and yet different: Trinity.

Now reflect on these passages concerning the divinity of Christ. Note in particular what Christ says to Philip when asked to reveal the father (John 14:8). This is excellent when dealing with Jehovah’s witnesses. Several of the passages refer to worshipping Jesus. The New Testament uses the word only when speaking of a god (like an idol), or God himself. It is reserved for deity. In today’s language we treat it so lightly that we are not shocked when someone says, “I worship Michael Jordan. He’s my idol.” Do we say such things literally or figuratively? I believe our hearts are so misplaced that we mean it literally without recognizing how appalling that must be to God, but that’s another subject. In Scripture, it is meant literally, and it refers to a god or to God himself. It therefore indicates equality with God in our hearts or in fact.

MAT 2:11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and *worshipped* him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

MAT 14:33 Then those who were in the boat *worshipped* him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

MAT 28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and *worshipped* him.

LUK 19:44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of *God’s coming to you.*”

LUK 22:70 They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied, “*You are right* in saying I am.”

LUK 24:52 Then they *worshipped* him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

JOH 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, *and the Word was God.*

JOH 1:2 He was *with God* in the beginning.

JOH 12:44 Then Jesus cried out, “When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but *in the one who sent me*.

JOH 12:45 When he looks at me, *he sees the one who sent me*.

JOH 14:8-10 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” 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’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, *it is the Father, living in me*, who is doing his work.

ROM 1:4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the *Son of God* by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROM 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, *who is God* over all, forever praised! Amen.

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

HEB 1:3 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.

REV 5:8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders *fell down before the Lamb*. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The Humanity of Christ

The next section contains passages on Christ’s humanity. He was not beyond pain or weariness. He was born of woman, died at the hands of men, lived, breathed, and ate just like any of us - but he was a perfect servant of the one true living God. His faithfulness and righteousness are therefore worthy and amply cover our own faithlessness and self-righteousness.

MAT 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

LUK 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

JOH 4:6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

ACT 2:22 “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

ACT 2:23-24 This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised

him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

ROM 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

GAL 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

PHI 2:7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

PHI 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

1TI 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

1TI 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

1JO 4:2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

Relationships within the Godhead

Christ's identity with the Father

The following passages describe the relationship of Christ to the Father. He is God Almighty and the angels belong to him. Yet there is a distinction to be made between the fleshly limitations he subjected himself to, and the limitless power, knowledge and glory which are his alone. He acknowledges the Father as a distinct person from himself. Nonetheless, he declares an absolute identity with the Father. To have seen Jesus Christ is to have seen God.

MAT 11:27 “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

MAT 24:30 “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

Compare this passage from Daniel that Mat. 24:30 alludes to. It speaks of his eternal reign, and a face to face meeting with God. No man looks on the face of God and lives, except the Son.

Dan 7:13-14 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of

every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

MAT 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

MAT 24:36 “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but *only the Father*.”

JOH 10:30 I and the Father *are one*.” [the Greek is the number 1]

JOH 10:38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that *the Father is in me*, and I in the Father.”

JOH 14:10 Don’t you believe that *I am in the Father*, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

JOH 14:11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

JOH 14:13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. [as distinct from bringing glory to himself]

JOH 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you [distinct]. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one [unified].

JOH 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

TIT 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of *our great God* and Savior, Jesus Christ,

HEB 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels *worship* him.”

The Holy Spirit’s relationship to the Father

The next group of passages reveals the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father. He is not just the energy of God at work, but He is a unique personality. You cannot lie to an energy force, nor can you distinguish the Holy Spirit from God. Yet, the Bible does distinguish this person of the Godhead or it would not have said the lie was told to ‘God’ in Acts 5:4, but told to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:3.

JOH 14:26 But the Counselor, 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.

ACT 5:3 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?

ACT 5:4 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 to men but to *God.*"

The Holy Spirit's relationship to Christ

Next we find the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ. He has what some have called a 'spotlight ministry' to bring to light the person of Jesus Christ and the glory of God the Father.

LUK 4:1 Jesus, *full of* the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was *led* by the Spirit in the desert,

LUK 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the *power* of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

JOH 3:34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God *gives him* the Spirit without limit.

JOH 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another *Counselor* to be with you forever –

JOH 14:17 the Spirit of *truth*. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor *knows* him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

JOH 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; *I* will come to you. [i.e. Christ is the Spirit]

JOH 14:26 But the *Counselor*, 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.

JOH 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom *I will send* to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who *goes out from the Father*, he will testify about me.

2CO 3:17 Now the Lord *is* the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2CO 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who *is* the Spirit.

Who lives in us?

The following passages evidence that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit live in us. In that sense at least, the Godhead is indivisible and yet distinguishable in its persons.

PSA 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

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

ISA 63:11 Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people – where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them,

JOH 14:17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

ROM 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

1CO 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that *God's Spirit lives in you?*

GAL 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but *Christ lives in me*. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

EPH 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which *God lives by his Spirit*.

2TI 1:14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the *Holy Spirit who lives in us*.

1JO 3:24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1JO 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, *God lives in us* and his love is made complete in us.

In whom do we live?

Next we see that we live in God and in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. This gives insight into the fact that God is One, but triune in his persons. If it were not so, we would *be* God both corporately and individually based on these passages; and that would be contrary to the majority of Scripture. Our interpretation of single passages *must* be constrained by the general thrust of Scriptural teaching. We see here in Romans 8, a contrast between those who live *in the Spirit* and those who live *in the flesh*. It is a matter of submitting our control to another, not being absorbed into another (as Eastern mystics might understand it). Union does not mean merger. We retain both our identity, which must be conformed to the image of Christ, and our will, which must be submitted to the will of God.

ROM 8:1-17 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those *who are in Christ Jesus*, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live *according to the sinful nature* but *according to the Spirit*.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind *controlled* by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those *controlled* by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.¹ And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead *is living in you*, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, *who lives in you*.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with *our spirit* that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

GAL 5:25 Since *we live by the Spirit*, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

1JO 3:6 No one who *lives in him* keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

1JO 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love *lives in God*, and God in him.

Recalling the imagery of the buckets in the ocean, it becomes clear that although we are imperfect vessels, we are nonetheless temples of the Holy Spirit. We have been given the same authority as Christ over sin in our lives and in the world around us. We can bind and we can loose. We have the substance of God in us, imperfectly contained. We are not Jesus Christ. And we do not speak the words of God directly. But we are eternal, and we are empowered, and we are joint heirs of the kingdom, and we are under the Lordship of Christ. We reign *with* Christ and we are *under* His reign. All power and glory are His alone. If he is not God, then that cannot be true (1 Pet. 4:11, Rev. 5:13; 15:3-4).

To understand the Trinity is to understand these things as well:

- *Marriage*: a plurality of persons living in perfect order, unity, and harmony
- *Abiding in Christ*: a plurality of persons living in perfect order, unity, and harmony
- *Maintaining Church Unity*: a plurality of persons living in perfect order, unity, and harmony
- *Waiting on God*: a plurality of persons living in perfect order, unity, and harmony
- *Enduring trials*: a plurality of persons living in perfect order, unity, and harmony
- *Loving others as we are loved by Christ*: a plurality of persons living in perfect order, unity, and harmony

¹ Here the Spirit is identified with Christ; He is distinguished from Christ in **Rom. 15:30** “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me...”^{NAU}

Conclusions on the Trinity

Have we satisfied the proof-test for the Trinity? Did we meet all four of the criteria that we established at the beginning of this examination? I believe the answer to that is a resounding, “Yes!”

1. We found numerous passages speaking of the plurality of the Godhead, and numerous other passages speaking of the unity of the Godhead. If there is no inconsistency, it can only mean that God is one and many at the same time...

2. We found many passages describing a unique act (giving life, performing the resurrection) and attributing it to each of the three persons of the Godhead. Unless all three have the same power (polytheism), and in light of the fact that the Scripture declares that God is one, then all three must be the same being...

3. We listed groups of passages that described a unique relationship with us (creator, living in and controlling us), and yet attributed such a relationship to more than one person in the Godhead. Too many passages of Scripture say, “I formed you” (Gen. 2:7, 19; Dt. 32:6; Ps. 65:5-6; Jer. 1:5) to the exclusion of “We formed you” that it can only mean that there is a single being who is our Creator, but who has three distinct personalities. And if that is true, then the “we” and “us” in Genesis refers to the triune Godhead, and not the heavenly host.

4. We identified functional activities that logically could only have been performed by a single person, (forgiving sin, reading hearts and minds, speaking God’s words directly, sending the Holy Spirit, fulfilling our prayer requests), and yet Scripture refers to the same functional activity performed by more than one person. Once more, it must either be that it refers to the same being or there are more gods than one. There is only *one* God (Dt. 6:4), therefore He must be Three in One...

We looked at the dual nature of Christ and how he could be both God and man with no inconsistency. We tried the analogies of the Navy Seal, the pyramid of mirrors, and the buckets in the ocean. This mysterious condition, so hard to put into words, is labelled a “Trinity” by the Church. We cannot explain it any more clearly than Scripture itself does. It is unavoidable, rampant in Scripture, and yet unfathomable. God is beyond our comprehension, but he has called us to know Him. His nature is Triune. If we accept that, even if we cannot understand it, then we come to know the God of the Bible. And if we reject it, because we cannot understand it, then we may never know the God of the Bible. We will only know another god. The Trinity is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity, a core teaching of Scripture. If you reject it, you reject Christ because he will not be God incarnate. The Word did not become flesh. He did not reveal the Father. And he did not take your sin upon himself to present you blameless before the Father’s throne of judgment. If you accept it, you accept it on faith alone, not reason. You accept it because that is what the Bible reveals. *What other proof do we need?*