



## "THE TRINITY IN THE BIBLE"

I've often heard it said that the Trinity is a made up doctrine, it doesn't appear in the Bible and is something Christians use to hide behind the fact that, in reality, they worship three different gods and not one God. The only thing we can agree with the above statement is that the word, *Trinity*, is not in the Bible. We will see, however, that the Bible clearly teaches God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit...three Persons or attributes if you like, but one unique Being.

All of creation has a 'threeness' to it. For a start, we live in a 3D universe. There are three states of matter (gas, liquid, solid), a triangle provides the most stable frame in building, and so on. Even a human being, created in the image of God, is a trinity: if you consider someone you know you could make any of the following statements about them:

- they are/are not good looking;
- they are/are not intelligent;
- they are/are not caring.

Our physical being is very much part of 'us', but does not affect our intelligence. Neither of those have any direct bearing on our personality or 'spirit'. Yet each of them helps others to know who we are.

We are made in the image of God, ergo God too can be seen in this threefold way. And we see Him like that throughout the Bible.

To start with, however, let's look at some verses which express this explicitly. They don't require much comment, but they are the places to turn to to demonstrate that from the days of scripture onwards God has been seen as Trinity.

2 Corinthians 13:14 says it all: *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* (NIV) The Three in One seen clearly - although of course, some will argue that 'God' is used along with Jesus and the Holy Spirit

and not including them. But in that case why would Jesus come before God in the list?

We see the Three again in Matthew 3:16,17 at Jesus' baptism, where the Father speaks from Heaven declaring Jesus to be His beloved Son and the Holy Spirit descends from the Father to the Son.

The Book of Revelation gives us perhaps the clearest view of all of this, but in order to see clearly we need to have the right glasses on. Revelation is full of allusions to Old Testament ideas, and to fully appreciate what it says we need to understand how the pictures were used in the Old Testament.

Let's start in Revelation 1:4-6 where John writes:

*Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father -- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.* (NIV)

Notice the phrase "seven spirits before His throne". This is not a new phrase to the scholars reading this letter in Jewish circles. Turn back to Zechariah 4: 2,10 and we read: *I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights....(These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth.)* (NIV)



This was clearly also linked to the 7 branch lampstand in the Temple, where it alluded to the Presence of God amongst His people, bringing light.

So, we see the Holy Spirit described as the eyes of God ranging throughout the world. Yet also this 'Seven Spirits' is described as being before the Throne. Always there with God, always ranging over the world. Seven, the number of perfection or holiness, describing Him perfectly.

We see this again a few chapters on in Revelation. Read chapters 4 and 5 where you will see:

4:5 *Seven lamps were blazing, ...the seven Spirits of God*

The same image as the one in Zechariah and then, in chapter 5, we see that these seven Spirits are now identified with **the Lamb who was slain!** (5:6). So, the very clear link between the Father and the Spirit from the Temple and Zechariah is now made between the Lamb and the Spirit in Revelation. This statement powerfully attributes "God" to the Lamb, to Jesus.

Revelation 4 and 5 show us much more too. If you look at the Throne, who is on it? Clearly God, with the Holy Spirit as before. But also we see the Lamb, standing in the centre of the Throne. The very Throne of Heaven, seat of God Almighty, and we see God, we see the Lamb, we see the Spirit right there.

In the next column you will see that there are verses that identify each of the three persons of the Trinity with different aspects of the Gospel, for instance, Salvation. The Father was involved in Salvation, the Son obviously was, and so too the Holy Spirit. The same is true for Creation, etc. All are described as omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Spend some time working through these verses to see that all the aspects of God are applied to each of the Trinity in different places.

That should not surprise us, for God is One. If I was asked to make someone a cup of tea, would it be my physical self that did it, or my

**TRINITY, THE.**  
 Doctrine of proved from Scripture. Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:3-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2; Jude 1:20,21; Rev 1:4,5.  
 Divine titles applied to the three persons in. Ex 20:2; John 20:28; Acts 5:3,4.  
 Each person in, described as  
 Eternal. Rom 16:26; Rev 22:13; Heb 9:14.  
 Holy. Rev 4:8; 15:4; Acts 3:14; 1 John 2:20.  
 True. John 7:28; Rev 3:7.  
 Omnipresent. Jer 23:24; Eph 1:23; Ps 139:7.  
 Omnipotent. Gen 17:1; Rev 1:8; Rom 15:19; Jer 32:17; Heb 1:3; Luke 1:35.  
 Omniscient. Acts 15:18; John 21:17; 1 Cor 2:10,11.  
 Creator. Gen 1:1; Col 1:16; Job 33:4; Ps 148:5; John 1:3; Job 26:13.  
 Sanctifier. Jude 1:1; Heb 2:11; 1 Pet 1:2.  
 Author of all spiritual operations. Heb 13:21; Col 1:29; 1 Cor 12:11.  
 Source of eternal life. Rom 6:23; John 10:28; Gal 6:8.  
 Teacher. Is 54:13; Luke 21:15; John 14:26; Is 48:17; Gal 1:12; 1 John 2:20.  
 Raising Christ from the dead. 1 Cor 6:14; John 2:19; 1 Pet 3:18.  
 Inspiring the prophets, etc. Heb 1:1; 2 Cor 13:3; Mark 13:11.  
 Supplying ministers to the Church. Jer 3:15; Eph 4:11; Acts 20:28; Jer 26:5; Matt 10:5; Acts 13:2.  
 Salvation the work of. 2 Thess 2:13,14; Titus 3:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2.  
 Baptism administered in name of. Matt 28:19.  
 Benediction given in name of. 2 Cor 13:14.

Source: The MacArthur Study Bible 0-8499-1222-9

mental/intelligent self (knowing how to do it) or my caring/ personality self (desiring to serve and help)? All *three* aspects of my being were involved in the task, though possibly we might talk about one aspect more in relation to any one task than another.

So, in the same way we can see all members of the Trinity involved in all of Gods activity.

To conclude with just one instance: Creation. The Bible opens and like all good books it introduces us to the main character and what He is like immediately. *In the beginning God created.* God's very nature is to

bring forth life. And in these verses too we see the Trinity. The Spirit of God gets an explicit introduction, He is seen hovering over the deep, or *brooding* as it says in the older translations. Waiting to bring forth life. But the Son is there too, though not yet revealed. He does not get fully revealed until the New Testament (possibly not fully until the book that declares itself to be the Revelation of Jesus Christ). But He is here, for us John tells us in chapter one of his gospel *In the beginning was the Word...nothing was made that was made but through Him* (my paraphrase). How did God create? He spoke. What did He speak? The Word of God. Jesus. And the first thing this Trinity God created was Light. I don't think just physical light. When He said "Let there be light" I think He was including in that all meanings of the word...understanding, revelation, knowledge of Him in all His Persons.