

**Fundamentals of the Faith**  
*Lesson Three, Part One: The Trinity*

The doctrine of the Trinity presents us with the highest of mysteries of Scripture

**I. Arriving At The Doctrine Of The Trinity**

The doctrine of the Trinity gives us a blueprint for how to do theology:

Declare your presupposition: Scripture is without error or contradiction

Collect your biblical data: All the mentions of the particular topic

Form your theology from your data and presupposition



Deuteronomy 6:4  
Mark 12:32  
1 Timothy 2:5



Romans 15:16  
John 1:1  
Acts 5:3-4

The gathering of data reveals: God is One and Three Persons are referred to as Divine  
Presupposition: Scripture is without error or contradiction

Our duty: Harmonize the data assuming that all data is true, absent of contradiction

Harmonization yields an expression of the Trinity: One God in Three Persons

This means that all three Persons share the same Divine essence, characteristics, and attributes

**II. Scripture's Witness To One God/Three Persons**

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness"*

## **Genesis 1:26**

The use of plural pronouns (“Us”, “Our”) are evidence of a Divine Trinity Divine because only God can create, or “make”.

*And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*

## **Matthew 3:16-17**

Father, Son, And Spirit, all spoken of in Scripture as Divine (as noted earlier), appear together in Scripture, emphasizing their co-existence.

The recording of this appearing combats the heresy of modalism

In the OT, God was Father

From the Incarnation through Pentecost, God was the Son

From Pentecost forward, God is the Holy Spirit

This heresy is still present today in Oneness Pentecostalism

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

## **2 Corinthians 13:14**

In Paul’s blessing (benediction) of the church in Corinth, he invokes the names of each member of the Trinity

### **III. The Early Church’s Battle For The Doctrine Of The Trinity**

From the beginning, the charge levied by the Jews: Polytheists

With that charge came the accusation of Trinitarian Christianity being a form of paganism

One of the most prominent early church heretics: Arius

Arius believed that the Son was of lesser authority (subordinate to) the Father

Arius believed that Jesus was of a lesser substance than the Father

This teaching is alive today in the teaching of Jehovah’s Witnesses

The spread of such teaching led to the calling of an ecumenical council by Emperor Constantine  
The Council Of Nicea is convened in 325AD

The council is described as such:

The most distinguished of God's ministers from all the churches which abounded in Europe, Africa, and Asia assembled here. The one sacred building, as if stretched by God, contained people from [a very long list of nations]. There were more than 300 bishops, while the number of elders, deacons and the like was almost incalculable. Some of these ministers of God were eminent for their wisdom, some for the strict living, and patient endurance of persecution, and others for all three. Some were venerable because of their age, others were conspicuous for their youth and mental vigor, and others were only just appointed.<sup>1</sup>

The council issues an expression of orthodox Trinitarian affirmation; The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible;  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, of the substance of the Father; God of God and Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made, of the same substance as the Father, by whom all things were made, in heaven and on earth: who for the sake of us men and our salvation, descended, became incarnate, and was made man, suffered, arose again on the third day, and ascended into the heavens, from where he will come again to judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Catholic and Apostolic church anathematizes those who say "There was a time when he was not," and "Before he was begotten, he did not exist" and "He was made from that which did not exist." The same goes for those who assert that he is of a different substance or essence from the Father, or that he was created, or can be changed.

A later orthodox expression of Trinitarian theology, affirming the work in Nicea, harmonizing presupposition and data:

---

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius Pamphilus

This divine and infinite Being consists of three real persons, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> These three have the same substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence without this essence being divided.<sup>3</sup> The Father is not derived from anyone, neither begotten nor proceeding. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.<sup>5</sup> All three are infinite and without beginning and are therefore only one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being. Yet these three are distinguished by several distinctive characteristics and personal relations. This truth of the Trinity is the foundation of all of our fellowship with God and of our comforting dependence on him.

**1689 London Baptist Confession Of Faith, Chapter Two Paragraph Three**

---

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6

<sup>4</sup> John 1:14,18; 3:16

<sup>5</sup> John 15:16; Galatians 4:6