

THE TRINITY'S THIRD PERSON

The central mystery of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity or what is also referred to as the Triune God. The term "Trinity" describes a relationship not of three gods, but of one God who is three persons. Trinity does not mean tritheism which means that there are three beings who together are God. Neither is the Trinity modalism or that which denies the distinction of persons within the Godhead, claiming that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are just ways in which God expresses Himself. Trinity is used in an effort to define the fullness of the Godhead both in terms of His unity and diversity. While the term "Trinity" does not appear in the scriptures, the truth is reflected in both the Old and New Testaments:

- O.T. "In the beginning God (Elohim) created..." - Gen. 1:1
Elohim is a plural noun and implies plurality.
- O.T. "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness..." - Gen. 1:26
"Us" and "Our" imply plurality.
- O.T. "Behold, the man has become like one of Us..." - Gen. 3:22
- O.T. "Come, let Us go down..." - Gen. 11:7
- O.T. The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."
- Ps. 110:1
- N.T. "...He saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son....'" - Mk. 1:10-11
- N.T. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things..."
- Jn. 14:26
- N.T. "...the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness to Me."
- Jn. 15:26
- N.T. "Go therefore...baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."
- Matt. 28:19
- N.T. "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one." - I John 5:7

While both the Old and New Testaments imply and bear witness to the plurality of the Godhead, we must be careful to emphasize that both Judaism and Christianity are monotheistic faiths. Monotheism means one God. The "shema" is at the core of Jewish belief and liturgy declaring "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one!" The Trinity is not a concept of three gods, which would be a violation of the First Commandment of Decalogue (Ten Commandments), but rather affirms monotheism, God is one in deity, dignity and differing in duty, one in essence, three in person (note Jn. 15:26, I Pet. 1:2).

Finally, there is also a distinction in the work done by each member of the Trinity. The work of salvation is in one sense common to all three persons of the Trinity. Yet, in manner of activity, there are differing operations assumed by all. The Father conceives initiates, speaks and creates; the Son redeems the creation; the Holy Spirit regenerates, transforms and sanctifies, applying redemption to believers.

Important Quotes

- "He who does not know God, the Holy Spirit, cannot know God at all." - Thomas Arnold
- "Without the presence of the Spirit, there is no conviction, no regeneration, no sanctification, no cleaning, no acceptable works. Life is the quickening Spirit." - W.A. Criswell
- "The Holy Spirit is not meant to just be studied, conceptualized or debated, but rather, experienced personally, peacefully and powerfully." - David J. du Plessis
- "O Holy Spirit, renew Your wonders in this our day, as by a new Pentecost." - Pope John XXIII
- "Long before the Holy Spirit became an article of the Apostles Creed, He was a living reality in the experience of the primitive Church." - Edward Schweizer

THE PRIMARY WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- I. The Spirit as Illuminator
Gen. 1:23, Ps. 119:105, Jn. 16:13-15, I Cor. 2:9-16, II Pet. 1:21
- II. The Spirit as Transformer - Jn. 15:8-13, Rom. 12:2, Tit. 3:5, II Cor. 3:17-18
 - A. The regenerator - gr. verb *geniauo* = generate, to be, become, happen
 1. To convict of sin
 2. To convince of righteousness and ultimate judgment
 3. To teach, instruct, guide into all truth - Neh. 9:20, I John 2:27
 4. To conform to the character of Christ - Rom 8:28-30
- III. The Spirit as Comforter = gr. *paraclete* = one who comes alongside with comfort and consolation - Jn. 14:16-18, Lk. 2:25, Isa. 40:1-2,11, Isa. 66:10-13
- IV. The Spirit as Enabler - Matt. 3:11, Acts 1:5,8, Acts 2:4,38-39
 - A. Baptism of and by the Spirit for regeneration
 - B. Baptism in or with the Spirit for empowerment, enablement
 1. Empowered for worship, witness and warfare
 2. Enabled with gifts and callings for service
- V. The Spirit as Sanctifier - I Pet. 1:15-16, Jn. 15:16, Jn. 17:17-19, I Cor. 6:11
 - A. The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence and work of sanctification - Gal. 5:22-23
- VI. The Spirit as Sealer and Guarantor - Eph. 1:13-14, Eph. 4:30