

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Theology Proper – Study of God– Part  
2  
The Trinity

## Introduction

- This is an extremely important subject.
  - Belief in the Trinity is a salvation issue.
- People will come to your door denying the Trinity.
  - JW's outright deny it.
  - Mormons hold to a "Trinity in purpose," but deny God is a real Trinity.
- My own run-ins and the results.
  - JW's when I was 17; Guy at the Airport; Woman at GCC.
- The Trinity rightly belongs under the category of God's Properties.

## A Working Definition

- Definition: We believe there is only **one living and true God** (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), yet **He exists eternally in three Persons**—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). God is an infinite, omniscient Spirit (John 4:24) perfect in all His attributes, and one in essence.



## Start With Jesus Christ

- It is logical to begin the topic with Jesus Christ.
  - He revealed it to us.
  - Rejecters of the Trinity begin by rejecting Christ.
  - If it can be shown that Jesus is God, then it is less of a struggle to convince someone of the Trinity .
- It must be noted, there are some heretics that accept the divinity of Christ, but reject the Trinity.
  - Modalists
  - Ditheists
  - Tritheists



## Methodology

- Ask Two Questions for each member of the Trinity.
  - Is the member a person?
  - Is the member God?
- If the member is a person, then they are not an impersonal force.
- If the member is God, and there are three people defined and described this way, then God is a Trinity. Case closed.
- So we will apply these questions to Jesus Christ.

## Is Jesus Christ a Person?



- He was a man.
  - 1Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the **man** Christ Jesus,
- He was a teacher.
  - Matt 7:28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching,
- He had feelings.
  - Matt 14:14 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he **had compassion** on them and healed their sick.

## Is Jesus Christ a Person

- He has a mind.
  - Philippians 2:5 **Have this mind** among yourselves, which is **yours in Christ Jesus**,
- Why is this important?
  - Non-believers and heretics don't really deny this about Jesus.
  - They do deny it about the Holy Spirit.
  - False religions like Hinduism and Buddhism deny a personal creator.
  - Demonstrating personhood and divinity for all three members silences critics from all sides.
  - Personhood for Christ is easy. Once we show His divinity, all other religions are taken down in one swoop.



## Is Jesus Christ Divine?

- Both Jesus and the Bible clearly state His divinity.
- He existed from the beginning.
  - John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- He is the Creator of the Universe.
  - John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
  - Col 1:16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him.
- Explicit Statements.
  - Col 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,



## Is Jesus Divine?

- There are many implicit pieces of evidence from Scripture.
- Only God is to be worshipped.
  - Matt 2:2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."
  - John 20:28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"
- Only God can forgive sins.
  - Matt 9:2 And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."



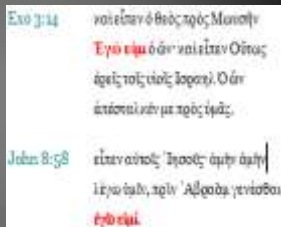
## Jesus Argued for God's Oneness

- Jesus held to the Shema Israel in Deut 6:4.
  - Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
  - Mark 12:28-29 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29) Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.



## Linguistic Proofs

- In Exodus 3:14, God identifies Himself to Moses as I AM, or **ehyeh-asher-ehyeh**.
  - This eventually became the tetragrammaton YHWH, the name of God.
  - When the LXX was made, they translated **ehyeh-asher-ehyeh** to **ego eimi**, or **egō eimi**.
- In John 8:58 Jesus answered the same of Himself with Before Abraham was, I AM.
  - Jesus would have said the Hebrew, and John translated to Greek. Note the Jew's reaction in vv. 59.



## Linguistic Proofs

- Eventually, the Jews became too afraid to say YHWH.
  - They substituted YHWH with the generic term, Lord, or **adonai**. All of the Hebrew manuscripts used this substitute.
  - When the LXX was made, the translators translated **adonai** as **kuprios** or **kurios**.
- In the New Testament, Jesus was called **kuprios** many times.
  - Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.



## The Holy Spirit

- Some people have a hard time accepting the Holy Spirit as God.
  - Yet, the hang up here is they usually deny his personhood. Thus, we will spend more time on that.
- So these same two questions will be applied to the Holy Spirit.



## Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

- Jesus described Him as **another paraclete**.
  - John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper**, to be with you forever,
- Holy Spirit is never referred to as an “it.” Also, masculine personal pronouns are attached to the Holy Spirit, even though the word is neuter.
  - John 16:8 And when **he** comes, **he** will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:
  - John 16:13-14 When the Spirit of truth comes, **he** will guide you into all the truth, for **he** will not speak on his own authority, but whatever **he** hears **he** will speak, and **he** will declare to you the things that are to come. 14) **He** will glorify me, for **he** will take what is mine and declare it to you.
  - Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit **himself** intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
- This was how the NT authors could convey truth about Him.

## Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

- The Holy Spirit has a will.
  - Acts 16:6-7 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7) And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.
- The Holy Spirit possesses “ego.” He is aware of His own existence, as expressed by “I.”
  - Acts 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”
- The Holy Spirit has feelings.
  - Eph 4:30 And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- So it is clear the Holy Spirit is a person, not an impersonal force.

## Is the Holy Spirit God?

- Heretics usually deny His divinity by denying His personhood. We already covered that.
- Showing His divinity is not difficult.
- The Holy Spirit is the Creator.
  - Gen 1:2 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.
- The Holy Spirit is eternal (a divine attribute).
  - Heb 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.



## Explicit Statements

- There are explicit verses that declare His divinity.
  - 1Co 12:4-6 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5) and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.
  - 2Cor 3:17 Now the **Lord** is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
  - Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart **to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4) While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**”
- Like Christ, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us.
  - Rom 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself **intercedes** for us with groanings too deep for words. 27) And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit **intercedes** for the saints according to the will of God.

## The Father



- No one questions the Father’s divinity.
- Just in case, here is a verse.
  - John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.
- The very title “Father” makes Him personal.

## Summary of the Three

- We have all three members of the Trinity to be demonstrated as personal and divine.
- This achieves a number of things for us.
  - First, the Eastern religions are deemed to be false because their concept of God is impersonal.
  - Second, the heretics are wrong for either denying the divinity of Christ, or the personhood of the Holy Spirit.
  - Finally, the unbelieving world is in error as well since they deny the divinity of Christ.
- Furthermore, to refute the Jewish argument that Christians worship three gods (tritheism), remember that Jesus affirmed the shema.
  - He taught that even though the Father was God, the Son was God, and the Holy Spirit was God, all three are One, and there is only One God

