



The Church of God International

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

19

Understanding the Pagan Trinity

Doctrinal Statement:

The concept of a closed or restricted godhead composed of three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is non-biblical. The Godhead is a Family, presently revealed as composed of only the Father and the Son, which will eventually include all those who have been given salvation through Christ. The Holy Spirit is not a distinct person or individual entity but the power, mind, and essence of God.

The Catholic and Protestant arguments for the personality of the Spirit are identical. The reason this is true is because the Protestants have accepted the creeds and most of the dogma formulated by the Catholic Church on the subject. This can be substantiated by referring to the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Protestant Encyclopedia*, *McClintock & Strong*, and the *New Schaff Herzog* that refer to the same historical events, that led to the present structure, composition, and format of the doctrine. Where they differ is in the degree of emphasis placed on the tradition. The Catholics rely heavily on tradition while the Protestants deemphasize the same tradition. However, they still, in general conform to and accept the central core of the final form of the doctrine based on that tradition.

It is of notable interest that the less tradition is accepted, all the more nebulous, inexplicit, and fuzzy the case becomes, which is presented as proof that the doctrine is true.

Notice the following vague examples: **Billy Graham:** “It is not easy to explain who the Holy Spirit is. It is best to explain it by what he does. He is the good influence on your mind. He is God’s personal messenger to your heart. He is the third person of the Godhead.”

Baptist belief: “This (the Trinity) is a basic doctrine of Christianity. The Trinitarian formula (Matthew 28:19) is used at every baptism. The sublime mystery of the Trinity, of the eternal and infinite essence of God manifested in three persons, the Baptist leaves to the theologians (e.g., Billy Graham?) to interpret. He simply accepts it.” (From *Religions in America*, Rosten, p. 18).

Methodist belief: Methodists do not pretend to understand fully the meaning of the Trinity.... The doctrine of the Trinity (which they don’t understand) is also our model for seeing “understandings” of the Trinity doctrine. It gives us eye opening evidence that the Protestants accept the Catholic dogma that the Trinity is a “Mystery” which cannot be understood, but must be accepted. We must remember, God does not tell us to just “accept anything about Him”, but exhorts us to “prove ALL things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Under the titles “Holy Spirit” and “Trinity” the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, and *McClintock & Strong*, tell of the “often violent” controversies that shook the early Church over the entire subject of the Holy Spirit. Standard encyclopedias such as the *Americana* give added discernment and penetrating insight into the manner by which the original truth was corrupted using *traditions of men* rather than the plain teachings of God in the Scriptures (Mark 7:7–8).

As is usually the case with the schemes and traditions of men, the course of action is subtle, but the end result is “a doctrine entirely counter to the plan of God,” the gospel of Jesus Christ, the destiny of man, and the nature of God Himself.

Here then, are some quotes from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* to “prove” that the early “Church Fathers” supported doctrines actually formulated centuries later.

Clement: “We have only one God, one Spirit, one only Spirit of Grace in the, one same vocation in Christ.” (This statement doesn’t necessarily show a Trinity.)

Polycarp: “Lord God Almighty, Father of thy blessed and well beloved Son, Jesus Christ, ... in everything I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee by the eternal and celestial pontiff Jesus Christ, by whom, to thee, with Him and with the Holy Ghost, glorify now and forever.”

Comment: It is quite apparent that there is nothing in this statement that proves the Trinity. It should be noted that Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John, who had known Christ personally. He (Polycarp) was almost constantly fighting Rome to try to prevent compromises from being accepted as dogma. There is even a hint of a controversy in the above quote. Polycarp is saying his allegiance is to the eternal God, and *not* to some human “pontiff.” He lost his fight with Rome in the end, and was martyred.

Theophilus: This man is said to have been the first “to apply the characteristic word that was afterward adopted, when he said the members of the Godhead ‘form a Trinity.’”

St. Hippolytus: Though he does not speak at all clearly of the Holy Ghost regarded as a distinct person, supposes Him, however, to be God.”

“**Tertullian,** is one of the writers of this age whose tendency toward subordinationism is most apparent, and that in spite of his being author of the definitive formula: ‘Three persons, one substance.’”

“But we must come down towards the year 360 A.D. to find the doctrine on the Holy Spirit explained both fully and clearly.”

Comment: Note the paradoxical, often confusing statements again. On one hand, the words “not at all clear” are used. But suddenly, everything is formulated “fully and clearly” based on those same historical quotations. Yet the doctrine is still classified as a “strict mystery,” which implies total ignorance!

At any rate, we see that after a struggle of about 300 years, the “traditionists” won out over those who, like Polycarp, had “contended for the faith once delivered” (Jude 3), and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as third person in a Trinity was accepted as dogma.

It was in A.D. 325 that the Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicaea to settle some of these disputes that were rocking the Church. It was then that he supposedly accepted Christianity, though in fact he still required that he, as emperor, be worshiped as a god. From that time, however, he threw the influence and power of his office into the disputes of the Church, and Rome got its way.

Even after that, it required the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 to “condemn the Pneumatomachians” (those who still held to the truth) and publish a creed that served as a sort of “oath of allegiance” for the church members to dutifully recite, affirming their acceptance of the dogma. Many of these creeds are recited, during Protestant and Catholic worship services down to this day.

Some historians even feel that the doctrine was not completely formulated until the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. At least from that time, however, it became the “official formula of Catholic orthodoxy.” (All quotes from *Catholic Encyclopedia* article, “Holy Ghost.”)

The *New Schaff Herzog* sheds additional light on this period of church history. During the time some “Church Fathers” were propounding this theory, others seriously doubted its veracity. But, as usual, time has a way of allowing subtle variations to creep into any dogma, and the end result is often something nearly unrecognizable when compared to the original.

“While early Christian writings

(the Shepherd of Hermes, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen) seen at times to teach the subordination of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son, and to waver concerning his personality, upon the whole their testimony is unmistakably in favor of the personality.” (Comment: We saw other statements that were supposedly in favor of the personality in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*). But note the very next statement: “The doctrine of the Holy Spirit was not made prominent until the fourth century” (*New Schaff Herzog*, p. 331, article, “Holy Spirit”). As we saw, it was Constantine who decided the issue, by simply making the Catholic Church the official religion of Rome, and then condemning all who opposed her doctrines, right or wrong.

Review

1. *The Catholic and Protestant arguments for the personality of the Spirit are identical.*
2. *The Protestants have accepted the Catholic dogma of the Trinity.*
3. *Catholic dogma says the Trinity is a mystery which cannot be understood.*
4. *Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that we must “prove all things.”*
5. *The original truth was corrupted by using the traditions of men.*
6. *Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John who knew Christ.*
7. *Nothing in Polycarp’s statement suggests the Trinity or proves it.*
8. *The Trinity doctrine was probably not completely formulated until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.*
9. *Constantine settled the matter by making the Catholic Church the official religion of Rome.*
10. *Constantine condemned all who opposed Catholic dogma, right or wrong.*

Blasphemy, Against the Spirit (The Unpardonable Sin)

What is blasphemy? According to the *Thorndike Barnhart Dictionary*, it means to “speak about [God or sacred things] with abuse or contempt.”

Jesus said “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: But the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men: And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven Him” (Matthew 12:31–32).

When one blasphemes, he reviles God, or speaks or acts against Him. Blasphemy may be expressed in different forms. The Scriptures show the following particular example. Jesus healed a man who was possessed with a devil and was also blind and dumb. The people were amazed and rightly so, but some Pharisees who reacted to what the people were saying about Jesus were not the local rabbis. They were a group of Pharisees who, as Mark 3:22 reports, came down from Jerusalem searching for something they could use against Him, and they accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

Jesus sternly rebuked them for associating God’s Holy Spirit with Satan and rejecting its very existence and its power as a spiritual force (Matthew 12:22–37; Mark 3:22–30; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10).

But, were these people already condemned because of this blasphemy? Notice carefully Mark 3:29. “He is in danger of condemnation.” Christ gave this example as a warning. So we need to look further elsewhere for the full explanation of exactly what constitutes the unpardonable sin, as it is called, and what connection this awful fate of condemnation has with God’s Holy

Spirit.

The Apostle Paul tells us that God’s Holy Spirit, when added to the human spirit we already possess, makes us begotten children of God. “We have received the Spirit of Sonship,” as most Bible margins more correctly renders verse fifteen (Romans 8:15–16).

We are then the heirs (not yet inheritors) of the promises of God (Romans 8:15–16). But, if we endure to the end (Matthew 10:22; 24:13), we shall then become inheritors of the Kingdom of God, as Spirit-born sons of God.

However, just as a human embryo can be aborted if conditions are not right, if it fails to develop and grow properly, we may also be “aborted” spiritually. To avoid this, we need to overcome our sinful nature (Revelation 2:7, 11) and grow, producing spiritual fruit (Matthew 7:17–20).

Paul made this abundantly clear in the book of Hebrews when he wrote. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4–6).

Land that produces good fruit receives loving care, but land that produces thistles and thorns has to be burned off so the farmer can start over. An unproductive Christian life falls under God’s condemnation. We are not saved by works or conduct, but what we do is the evidence of our faith, see Hebrews 6:7–8.

It is God’s Spirit that “enlightens” us, giving us that missing element that enables our human minds to understand spiritual truth. Without this Spirit, spiritual things are fool-

ishness to us (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Once we have been given insight, and have accepted the revealed truth of God for what it is, then we must continue in that way of life revealed to us.

We symbolically killed our old, former way of wickedness, burying it in a watery grave when we were baptized (Romans 6:3–13).

A number of scriptures cause us to pause and consider our goings. These scriptures say, in effect, “I know this is the truth; I know this is the way I ought to be living, but it is too hard. I prefer to take the broad, easy path, satisfying every lust and desire instead of doing what I know is right—building character and growing spiritually.”

Jesus spoke of the wide and narrow gate in Matthew 7:13–14. In Luke 9:62, He said, in effect, that if we turn from that straight and narrow path once we have started down it, and refuse to return for an office in God’s Kingdom, most certainly God will not be pleased and He obviously would not want a person who is not committed to be working for Him. Would anybody?

Peter also gives a strong condemnation of such an individual using the analogy of a dog who returns to his own vomit (2 Peter 2:20–22).

We are further warned by Christ Himself to “remember Lot’s wife” who missed out on her chance for a new and better life because she longed to return to sinful Sodom (Luke 17:32). Paul recalls Esau as another bad example, because he sold his birthright for a bowl of soup (Hebrews 12:16).

God will pardon any sin when it has been deeply repented of. We must remember however, that just as in Esau’s case, we may have to live with our folly. God will not force a person to repent. He does call us to repentance (Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38–39). If we accept the call,

and continue in a repentant attitude, He considers us already His sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:17–18; Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16).

But if we at first accept the call, and begin to walk the path of righteousness, growing spiritually, but then decide to reject our calling, permanently, and willfully, with full knowledge of what we are doing, God has no choice but to assign us to the second death, from which there is no resurrection. Within circumstances of this nature, in a sense, the individual has made the choice himself to refuse eternal life.

Even in this God shows love and mercy. It is far better for an individual to simply cease to exist than to be made immortal, and live, forever under the control of a system of government (God's government) that he totally hates and despises.

There is another way the spirit is involved with the subject of salvation. Romans 8:11 tells us that we, like Jesus, will be resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit and be made immortal spirit beings, members of the Family of God. But what if we reject the source of eternal life? We will then have no means of attaining immortality (Romans 8:9). ("We are none of His"), and we become candidates for the second death, from which there is no resurrection (Revelation 2:11; 21:8).

Therefore, the unforgivable blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, then, cannot be committed out of ignorance and is not merely a single act, or a sin resulting from momentary weakness. It is an attitude, a state of mind. A person can commit this sin only if he is fully conscious of the fact that he is sinning, and he doesn't care that he is sinning, and commits the sin deliberately, willfully, without remorse, and has no intentions of ever repenting.

Some feel that rejection of the, (Trinity doctrine) constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The

Church of God contends that *acceptance* of it is a far greater mistake, for it is just one more clever deception foisted upon mankind by Satan through his instrument, the Mother of Harlots. "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations Of The Earth" (Revelation 17:4–5)

Paul warned us in 2 Corinthians 11:3–4 that others would undoubtedly come along after him, subtly preaching another Christ (subordinate to His mother), a different Spirit (member of a Trinity), and another gospel (saying the great false church is the kingdom of God already set up on the earth).

How this doctrine came to be formulated in the first place, why it actually is blasphemous, and is history, long predating Christianity, will be explained in the following sections.

Review

1. *Blasphemy is to speak about God or sacred things with abuse or contempt.*

2. *The Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.*

3. *Jesus rebuked them for associating God's Holy Spirit with Satan.*

4. *The Pharisees had not committed blasphemy yet, but they were in danger of condemnation.*

5. *The Holy Spirit added to our human spirit makes us begotten children of God.*

6. *We must continue on to overcome our sinful nature.*

7. *To avoid being aborted we must continue to grow in grace and produce spiritual fruit.*

8. *An unproductive Christian life falls under God's condemnation.*

9. *We are not saved by works or conduct, but what we do is evidence of our faith.*

10. *If we reject our calling willfully, we have rejected eternal life.*

11. *If we reject God's Holy Spirit of power, we will have lost the source of eternal life (Romans 8:9).*

12. *Rejecting the Trinity doctrine is not the unpardonable sin.*

Trinity?

Just what can we say about the Trinity? It is obvious that if we disprove the personality of the Spirit, we have no third person in the Godhead, and therefore, no Trinity!

The primary objection to the Trinity doctrine can be summed up by quoting once again from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Trinity": "...this same Trinity is immutable and unalterable forever." Pretty strong words! However, once we understand God's plan of salvation in its fullest sense, the above statement becomes grossly absurd, for by it the proponents of such a statement limit the God family to three persons forever. But the whole message of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, Christ's true gospel, is exactly the opposite.

Christ's whole purpose in humbling Himself, coming to earth as a human, His death and resurrection, was to lead the way, as a pioneer or captain, for a great number of actual members of the God family to be added as His younger brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:10). They, believe it or not, will also be called "God" (John 10:34; Revelation 3:12) and have positions in which they will even judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). See again the Bible study lesson, "Holy Spirit," section "Begetting and Birth."

We must be aware of some scriptures that outwardly seem to support the Trinity. The primary scripture is Matthew 28:19.

First John 5:7 is quoted by some,

but nearly all Bible scholars of any reputation admit it was not in the original. Scofield admits and writes of this in a footnote. "It is believed that a monk copyist added this verse as late as the 14th century, to support Catholic teachings about the Trinity."

Matthew 28:19 says "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The Greek word translated "in" is *eis*, which is more correctly translated "into." See *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* word number 1519, or *Young's Greek Lexicon* section, *EIS*. If the intention had been to render the passage as it is in the King James, the Greek word *en*, meaning "in," would undoubtedly have been used.

We are then actually baptized into something. But what? A person, or a group of persons? No! We are baptized into the *name* of the Father, etc. What is His name? It is God. God has revealed that there is a divine being referred to as "Father," and another as "Son." These are family names. We can become children of God, actual members of the divine family, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 6:17–18). Hebrews 2:10 and Romans 8:14–15 speak of many potential members of the God family, not just two (or three), Christ is already very God (Hebrews 1:8–10), and our potential is to actually become God also, strange as it might seem (compare John 10:34; 1 John 3:2; and Hebrews 2:6–11, which explain man's destiny).

So we are baptized into the family of God, or put into it, or plunged into it, as the Greek word *baptiso* implies.

Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of which the God family is composed, it, too, could be referred to as God. But as we have demonstrated before, that does not mean it must be a particular person who is an individual member of the Godhead. We must not jump to that conclusion as many have, bypassing the clear

teaching of the Scriptures. We will all be "holy spirits" someday, if we understand God's plan for man.

Therefore, we can see that the emphasis of Matthew 28:19 is actually to show that God is a growing family, not limited to any specific number of beings. Certainly not limited to three. Of course additional members will not be added until the proper time comes according to God's plan.

It is evident by the scriptures that the whole creation is waiting longingly for the actual manifestation of additional sons of God (Romans 8:19–22).

The first humans to be changed to spirit beings will be changed at the return of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20). The second major group will be added after a 1000 year reign of these first members with Christ (Revelation 20:5).

God's Spirit is so all-pervasive, so multifaceted, that it seems almost ludicrous to limit it, and God Himself, by falsely saying God is, and always will be, "One in three and three in one," or anything similar.

Satan of course would like to see God limited, and would like to make us believe that God is limited, for then he might have a chance to thwart God's plan. But God is, and always will be, more powerful than the sum total of all He creates. Otherwise, He would not be God.

There are a number of arguments used to prove the so called, "personality of the Spirit", but upon close examination it will be found that these arguments do not prove that the Spirit is a person, but prove just the opposite, that the Spirit is the power of God.

The Spirit indeed does proceed from the Father and Son, and this is true according to the scriptures. "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Psalm 104:30).

Let us compare this with a person blowing out a candle. We send forth our breath, which proceeds from our lungs and out our mouth, and the flame of the candle is extinguished. The Spirit is the power of God that He sends forth to do His bidding. This spiritual power is sent forth from God (Father or Christ) with latent potential energy that doesn't perform any act until God so wills a certain act. When He does will something to be accomplished, the Spirit is the agent He uses. In Psalm 104:30, He uses it to create.

It is quite clear, this Spirit is the power of God, and He sends it forth to accomplish His will. This energy, or force is present in His breath, which infers that the power itself came from Him. God is all-powerful.

When God adds the Holy Spirit to our minds by the laying on of hands after repentance and baptism the Spirit convicts our mind (conscience) and to a limited degree we are then enabled to perform good works according to His will. Naturally, God wants to be sure this power that comes with the Spirit will be used to accomplish godly works.

It is understandable that God would want to get to know us to see if we have an attitude of obedience, before allowing us to have complete use of this power source (Romans 8:29; Acts 5:32).

Once filled with the power of God's Spirit, the early apostles performed many mighty miracles, which Christ said, those who followed Him would be capable of doing, (John 14:12).

As we read the scriptures we should not be surprised to find certain passages which must, and do allow for personification of the Spirit, but this in no way can be taken to prove that the Spirit is a person.

The apostle Paul explains to the Romans that, "The Spirit maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8–27).

What is an intercessor? It is someone or something that stands between two persons, similar to an interpreter. Christ said just a few passages later, in verse 34, that He is our intercessor with the Father. Please note, that this is on the spirit level, both Christ and the Father are spirits. We are mortal. But through the Holy Spirit witnessing with our human spirit in our minds (Romans 8:16), the gap between the human, mortal level and the spirit level is bridged, and we then have personal contact established with Almighty God. Without this “bridge” or “connecting link,” the two realms are separated by an uncrossable gulf.

By coming to Christ in repentance and obedience, we receive the Holy Spirit, and with Christ as our intercessor we can spiritually enter the throne room of God our Father, and he will hear our prayers. Without this Holy Spirit “we are none of His” (Romans 8.9) And, without this Spirit we cannot understand spiritual things.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). There is no other “way” to salvation. John tells us that “as many as received Him, to them gave He *power* to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12). It takes power to become a son or daughter of God. What is this “power”? Paul reminded the Ephesians that they trusted in Christ “after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). Being sealed with the “Holy Spirit” of “power” makes it possible for us to become sons and daughters of God.

“The Spirit said to Philip...” (Acts 8:29). Here again, the Spirit is actually an intercessor or intermediary between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. God revealed the Scriptures to the writers “by His

Spirit” (Ezra 1:1). This shows How God influences men and controls our thoughts if He so desires. He “communicates” with men by influencing the spirit in our minds (Job 32:8; Ezra 1:1). He does this with a Spirit-to-spirit influence. He commands or wills His all-pervasive Spirit to *act* upon the spirit in our mind, and all of a sudden a thought, an idea, pops into our mind. We think we thought of it ourselves, but it could have been God influencing and leading us with His Spirit. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

Jesus said, “He shall not speak of Himself, but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak” (John 16:13). Also in John 14:15, 16, Jesus speaks of the Comforter (Greek: *Parakletos*).

What does the word *Parakletos* mean? The word “Comforter” is translated from the Greek *Parakletos*, which means “called to one’s side, or aid.” The word suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, and advocate; then generally, one who pleads another’s case, an intercessor, advocate. This Greek word is a masculine word, thereby demanding masculine modifiers. It is used only five times, four in John as “Comforter” (John 4:15, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and once in 1 John 2:1 as “advocate.” Christ was telling His disciples that He was the “Comforter” who would come to them and us in Spirit after His ascension to heaven (John 14:18–20). In 1 John 2:1, Christ is revealed as our advocate with the Father. Therefore, it is clear that the word *Parakletos* reveals another way in which God and Christ use their Spirit.

“HE or “IT”?”

A number of scriptures use the pro-

noun “he” when referring to the Holy Spirit. Others use “it.” Those who argue for the Trinity doctrine say these passages where “he” is used definitely prove that the Spirit is a person. What then do we do with the places where the neuter “it” appears? God our Father and Jesus Christ are always referred to by the masculine pronouns “He,” “His,” “Him,” and “Himself.” We never refer to a person as an “it.” We are always watchful to apply the proper gender to pronouns referring to people.

In most other languages nouns have a specific gender. The word for “ship,” for example, is usually feminine, and thus we hear ships referred to as “she” or “her,” though it would obviously be more correct to use “it,” we therefore find in the Greek language where the noun is masculine, masculine modifiers must be used to be grammatically correct. So, where the Greek word *Parakletos* (masculine) is used, masculine pronouns will appear.

Where the Greek word *pneuma* (neuter) is found by itself, translated “spirit,” the modifiers are also neuter, and the impersonal “it” or “which” appear. Be sure and study Romans 8:16, 26; John 7:39; Acts 6:10; 1 Corinthians 2:12; and 6:19.

Here are a few other scriptures that refute the personification of the spirit as a person. If the Holy Spirit were a person, the conception of Jesus Christ would involve fornication (Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:18–20).

It is not possible for a person to be everywhere in the universe at the same time (Psalms 139:7–11). The Holy Spirit is compared to “rivers of living water.” A person has no such quality (John 7:38). A person cannot be “poured out” (Acts 2:17–18). A person cannot be “quenched” (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Review

1. *The Catholic Encyclopedia tells us that the Trinity is immutable and*

unalterable forever, which would limit the God family to three beings forever.

2. Jesus as the captain of our salvation will bring many sons unto glory (Hebrews 2:10).

3. The brothers and sisters of Jesus will be like Him, and even have positions in which they shall judge angels.

4. The whole creation waits longingly for the sons of God.

5. God sends forth His Spirit to accomplish His will such as creating.

6. If the Holy Spirit were a person, the conception of Jesus Christ would involve fornication.

7. It is not possible for a person to be everywhere in the universe at the same time.

8. The Holy Spirit is compared to "rivers of living water."

9. A person cannot be poured out.

10. A person cannot be quenched.

History of the Trinity

The history of the pagan Trinity is almost as old as civilization itself. Just because the idea of Trinity is old, does not make it true—or false either, for that matter.

Probably the first recorded example of blatant idolatry present in religious systems practiced in ancient civilizations in the post flood world is that of Nimrod (Father), Horus (Son), and Semiramis (Wife and Mother). They actually came to be worshipped, but they were anything but godly. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before (against) the Lord, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (Genesis 10:9–10).

In fact according to ancient traditions, Nimrod is said to have committed incest by marrying his own mother after murdering his father. He, along with his mother-wife Semiramis, founded most of the pagan, pantheistic, idolatrous forms of worship that still permeates nearly every religion extant today to one degree or another. The mother-child

relationship, for example, is one of the cardinal tenets of the Roman Catholic Church. This has come down to our time virtually unchanged since the time of Nimrod.

For more about the history of the pagan Trinity, the student may find it helpful to obtain a copy of the book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop.

No Trinity doctrine existed in the early church or in the days when the original apostles were still living. It was not until the second and third centuries after Christ's death and ascension that the Roman church attempted to infuse this doctrine into their teachings. They met with vigorous opposition from the eastern churches in particular. It was in the area of Asia Minor that the original apostles, and their followers and disciples, had retained the pure untarnished Christianity of Jesus Christ. In the West, particularly in Rome, it was a different story.

Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24) originated the seat of the counterfeit Christian church in Rome. The populous there was mostly made up of uneducated pagans. In an effort to build up the membership of "Christianity" as rapidly as possible, the leaders compromised the teachings of Jesus with the pagan doctrines, simply giving the old pagan doctrines new "Christian" names. This way, the pagan populous would feel comfortable in the new religion and accept it more readily.

This attitude of making people comfortable is with us today. We find it most observable today in the common media and in our every day lives where we are told evil is good, and good is evil, and sinners without shame advertise their sins, and we must not hurt their feelings by pointing out their sins.

Each time the Roman church compromised one more doctrine, the eastern churches fought the change, but with the power of the Emperor

behind the western bishops, the change was usually effected.

There are numerous encyclopedia articles that give ample evidence of the struggles for pure doctrine that occurred in the first three centuries after the death of Christ. A list from the *Encyclopedia Americana* dealing with the great controversy over the Trinity include articles entitled "Arius," "Arianism," "Athanasius," "Creeds and Confessions," "Filioque," "Nicaea, Councils of," "Niciene Creed," "Trinity Doctrine," and this is only a partial list.

Before the New Testament canon was even complete, Jude, one of the half brothers of Jesus, made a plea that the church leaders in his day would "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). In the next few verses, he spoke of men who, like Simon Magus, had "crept in unawares" and corrupted the true doctrines even at that early date.

The Apostle John affirmed this fact when he wrote, before one hundred A.D., that "many deceivers are entered into the world" (2 John 7).

Additional information on this period of history is found in the religious encyclopedias. The following quotes are from *McClintock and Strong*, article "Trinity", page 553: "Towards the end of the first century and during the second many learned men came over both from Judaism and paganism to Christianity. These brought with them into the Christian schools of theology their platonic ideas and phraseology, and they especially borrowed from the philosophical writings of Philo."

"As was very natural, they confined themselves, in their philosophizing respecting the Trinity, principally to the Logos" (Christ). "Their views respecting the Holy Spirit are far less clearly expressed." "These philosophical Christians asserted rather the divineness of the Son and Spirit, and their divine origin, than

their equal deity with the Father.”

“Justin Martyr expressly declares that...the Holy Spirit is that divine power to act and execute...” “...most of these fathers of the second and third centuries...assented in general to the philosophy of Plato.”

At the end of the third century, in Origen’s time, it is written thus: “Few had as yet taught the entire equality of these three persons, but had allowed, in accordance with their Platonic principles, that the Son, though belonging to the divine nature, etc.”

Also, “in regard to the Holy Spirit, there was nothing decided, during the first three centuries, by ecclesiastical authority respecting his nature, the characteristic of his person, or his relation to the Father and the Son.”

We saw previously that finally, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Roman church decided what its official doctrinal position would be, based mostly on their philosophical arguments handed down from Plato, the pagan Greek philosopher.

Paul speaks about listening to such “philosophers” and their nonsensical views in (Colossians 2:8). Yet out of these vague beginnings came a doctrine that almost all professing Christians today would virtually stake their lives on. In the Middle Ages, the reformers “stood upon the ground of the Church Catholic” regarding this doctrine (*New Schaff-Herzog* article “Trinity,” page 20). *McClintock and Strong* notes that controversies defining the exact way the relationship should be understood are continuing to this day. In other words, modern-day “philosophers” are still at it.

What conclusion is reached? *Schaff-Herzog* reaches this conclusion: “It must be borne in mind, however, that dogmatic theology does not offer these explanations as a rational

perception of the matter, but it holds the Trinity rather to be a mystery. These statements (which “prove” the Trinity) must, therefore, be considered rather as negative, preventing non-Christians views, than as positive elucidations.” (Page 20, article “Trinity”).

Again it states, “The development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is historically clear...being almost exclusively due to Christological speculation.” This is almost as direct an admission one could expect to find that the doctrine has no real scriptural authority at all.

McClintock and Strong make this summary statement: “These [religious leaders steeped in Platonic philosophy] abandoned the expectation of a future Messiah, or regarded His kingdom as entirely of a moral nature.” In other words, they watered down the whole impact and intent of the gospel of the Kingdom of God that Christ and the apostles had preached. That gospel speaks of many members of the God family, but through this clever deception, inspired by Satan and borrowed from paganism, God’s family is limited to three persons forever.

The Bible, as one might expect, labels the source of this deception in plain language. The apostle John calls this false church “the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9). He goes on to call it “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.” Her false doctrines have come down through the ages from their inception as part of the dogma of the Babylonian Mystery Religion.

However, they have been given Christians names to give them a facade of righteousness. All nations have been taken in and deceived by her abominable doctrines. As she has a name of “mystery,” so does she

label her doctrines as “mysteries.” The Trinity is so labeled.

Review

1. *No Trinity doctrine existed in the early church or in the days when the original apostles were still living.*

2. *During the second and third centuries the Roman church attempted to infuse the Trinity doctrine in their teachings.*

3. *The Eastern churches opposed them, holding to the teachings of the original apostles.*

4. *Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24), originated the seat of the counterfeit Christian church in Rome.*

5. *To build up the membership of the Romish church the teachings of Jesus were mixed with the pagan doctrines.*

6. *The old pagan doctrines were given new “Christian” names.*

7. *Jude, the half brother of Jesus, made a plea that the church leaders in his day would “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.”*

8. *Jude spoke of men like Simon Magus, who “crept in unawares” corrupting true doctrines.*

9. *The Apostle John wrote around 100 AD., that “many deceivers are entered into the world.” (2 John 7)*

10. *Paul speaks about listening to such “philosophers” and their nonsensical views in Colossians 2:8.*

11. *Out of these vague beginnings that produced the Trinity, came a doctrine that most professing Christians believe.*

12. *Those steeped in Platonic philosophy have abandoned the expectation of a future Messiah, and have regarded His Kingdom as primarily of a moral nature.*

13. *The Apostle John calls this false church “the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9).*

14. *John goes on to call this false*

church "Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth."

15. As this false church has a name of Mystery, so she labels her doctrines as "Mysteries." The Trinity is so labeled.

The Trinity as a Mystery!

As noted in the section about the personality of the Spirit, most religious leaders are very vague when it comes to actually explaining, clearly and precisely, what the Holy Spirit is, and why they support the Trinity doctrine. Often the term "mystery" crops up. What is a "mystery," religiously speaking?

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* devotes an entire subsection to the subject of the "Trinity as a mystery" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Trinity," page 52). Following are some quotes from that section: "A mystery is a truth which we are not merely incapable of discovering apart from Divine Revelation, but which, even when revealed, remains 'hidden by the veil of faith and enveloped, so to speak, by a kind of darkness.'"

"As regards the vindication of a mystery, the office of the natural reason is solely to show that it contains no intrinsic impossibility, that any objection urged against it on the score that it violates the laws of thought is invalid."

"...the Christian Faith contains mysteries strictly so called. All theologians admit that the doctrine of the Trinity is of the number of these. Indeed, of all revealed truth, this is the most impenetrable to reason."

"The true profession of the mystery of the Trinity is to own that we do not comprehend it."

The truth is that the truth of God is NOT a mystery. Paul tells us that we are not to be ignorant and lack understanding (Ephesians 4:17-18). He also tells us we can understand everything we need to know about God, including His very nature and

Godhead, by looking to the physical creation, for it is modeled after the spiritual (Romans 1:19-22). Be sure and read also Ephesians 1:17-18 and John 8:12.

We must walk with Christ and then we will not be a part of the darkness. We will understand God the Father, Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Contrary to the idea of three beings or personages in the Godhead, the Bible is full of the number two from one end to the other. For example, there are two major divisions of the Bible, Old and New Testaments. Many prophecies are dual in sense, as previously mentioned. There was a former, or typical fulfillment, and there will be a latter, primary fulfillment. There was the first Adam and the second Adam, Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47).

Christ said, He and the Father are "One." Two persons, not three (John 10:30; John 14:10-11, 28, 31; John 15:1, 23-24).

Even nature itself is a witness to this duality. There are two sexes, male and female, day and night, the greater light that rules the day and the lesser light that rules the night. Trinitarians may point to water that can be found in three forms, solid, liquid, and gas as a proof of the Trinity. However, this only proves that water responds to whatever condition it finds itself in, hot or cold. Paul wrote, "For the invisible things of Him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* even makes this admission: "For no where in the Old Testament do we find any indication of a third person..." and "the twofold personality [of Father and Son] is strenuously asserted by the prophets" (article "Trinity," page 49).

While you will find verses in the

Old Testament speak of the Father and the Son along with the Spirit, they never imply that the Spirit is a person.

God says He doesn't change (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). It is man who always tries to inflate his ego and look a little more knowledgeable than his peers, who feels the need to philosophize and come up with some new concepts (Acts 17:18-21).

Of course Satan, the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), who has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9), is the real deceiving agent. False doctrines are the works of Satan.

Thankfully, it will not be long till Jesus Christ will return to rule this earth with a rod of iron (Revelation 12:5; 19:15). All the people of the world will then live peaceably and learn God's truth (Isaiah 54:5, 13; Mica 4:1-7).

According to the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit of God is neither the wild, uncontrollable force that takes over people and throws them into near hysteria nor is it the so called third person in a Trinity. God's Spirit is defined in the Bible as a power that can dwell in small measure inside a human mind and that inspires sound mindedness and courage. The Holy Spirit is peaceable and gentle, a power source by which miracles can be performed, and giving the human mind contact with God the Father.

This is a wonderful gift that comes to us from the Father through Jesus Christ and is truly priceless. It is of the greatest of privileges to receive this marvelous gift, a gift we do not deserve and can never pay for.

This conscience convicting gift of God, does not drive us, but leads us gently in the path of righteousness, allowing us to partake of the love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, and faith, of Almighty God, our Father, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

19

Understanding the Pagan Trinity

Test Yourself

Write your answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Check your answers with the answers found at the end of the test.

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

True or False Questions

1. The Catholic and Protestant arguments for the personality of the Spirit are surprisingly different.
2. Catholic dogma says the Trinity is a mystery which cannot be understood.
3. Paul wrote to the Romans that we must “prove all things.”
4. The original truth was corrupted by using the traditions of men.
5. Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle Peter who knew Christ.
6. Nothing in Polycarp’s statements suggests the Trinity or proves it.
7. The Trinity doctrine was probably not completely formulated until the Council of Nicea in A.D. 451.
8. Constantine condemned all who opposed Catholic dogma, right or wrong.
9. Blasphemy is to speak about God or sacred things with abuse or contempt.
10. The Sadducees accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.
11. Jesus rebuked Pharisees for associating God’s Holy Spirit with Satan.
12. The Holy Spirit added to our human spirit makes us begotten children of God.
13. We can ignore our sinful nature because Jesus doesn’t want people to stop sinning.
14. To avoid being aborted we must continue to grow in grace and produce spiritual fruit.
15. An unproductive Christian life falls under God’s condemnation.
16. We are saved by our works.
17. If we reject our calling wilfully, we can still hope for eternal life.
18. If we reject God’s Holy Spirit of power, we will have lost the source of eternal life (Romans 8:9).
19. Rejecting the Trinity doctrine is the unpardonable sin.
20. The Trinity is immutable and unalterable, correctly limiting the God family to three beings forever.
21. Jesus is the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10).
22. The whole creation waits longingly for the sons of God.
23. God sends forth His Spirit to accomplish His will such as creating.
24. It is very possible for a person to be everywhere in the universe at the same time.
25. The Holy Spirit is compared to “rivers of living water.”
26. A person cannot be poured out.
27. A person can be quenched.
28. No Trinity doctrine existed in the early church or in the days when the original apostles were still living.
29. During the second and third centuries

the Roman church attempted to infuse the Trinity doctrine in their teachings.

30. Simon Peter (Acts 8:9–24), originated the seat of the counterfeit Christian church in Rome.

31. To build up the membership of the Romish church the teachings of Jesus were mixed with the pagan doctrines.

32. The old pagan doctrines were given new “Christian” names.

33. Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, asked church leaders to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.”

34. Ezekiel spoke of men, like Simon Magus, who “crept

in unawares” corrupting doctrines.

35. Paul speaks about some philosophers and their nonsensical views in (Colossians 2:8).

36. Most professing Christians believe the Trinity.

37. Those steeped in Platonic philosophy have an expectation of a future Messiah, and His Kingdom.

38. Abraham calls the false church “the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9).

39. John calls the false church “Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.”

40. The Trinity is no mystery—it is clearly understood.

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Answers to True or False Questions: Score Yourself: Miss 0–3 = Excellent; Miss 4–6 = Good; Miss 7–9 = Fair

Answers: 1. False 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. False 6. True 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. True 13. False 14. True 15. True 16. False 17. False 18. True 19. False 20. False 21. True 22. True 23. True 24. False 25. True 26. True 27. False 28. True 29. True 30. False 31. True 32. True 33. True 34. False 35. True 36. True 37. False 38. False 39. True 40. False

All Scripture quotations taken from the King James Version except as noted. Text: Loren Chamberlain & Jim French

