

Is the concept of the Trinity taught in the Bible?

Introduction

When we speak about the being of God, we must all admit that we are limited in our understanding. We are finite, and God is infinite. We are limited, but God is unlimited. The people of God and believers in God have not concocted the doctrine of the Trinity in their own thinking over the centuries, but God's people have formulated their understanding of who God is based only on the infallible HOLY Scriptures delivered to his people through the centuries. If the Old Testament and the New Testament are indeed God's infallible, reliable, trustworthy and true words, then we can understand that the church fathers and the people of God believe that God is a Trinity yet One in essence. From the onset, we must admit that nowhere in the Old or New Testament are the word Trinity or Tri-Unity used. But as you will see as we go through the different portions of the Holy Scriptures, the Trinity is implied implicitly in the Old Testament in many parts and extensively and explicitly in the New Testament.

1. Old Testament Witness

What is taught implicitly in the O.T. is explicitly taught in the New Testament.

1.1 In Creation: When God created mankind He said:" Let **Us** make man in **our** own image" (Genesis 1:26). The implication is that there is more than one Person in the Godhead.

1.2 When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden God spoke to Himself again referring to Himself in the plural: "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of **Us**, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and also take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— therefore the LORD God sent him out of

the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.” (Genesis 3:22-23 NKJV).

1.3 At the Dispersion when God confused the people at the Tower of Babel, He said: "Come, let **Us** go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” (Genesis 11:7 NKJV) The implication of this texts is that there is more than one Person in the Godhead.

1.4 When God appeared to Isaiah the prophet and talked to him, God asked, " Who would go for **Us**?”. The same implication is valid as in the previous texts (Isaiah 6:8).

1.5 Isaiah calls the Messiah, who would be born of a Virgin, "Immanuel," which means in Hebrew: God with us (Isaiah 7:14). The one who would be born of a virgin would be God.

1.6 In Isaiah 9:6 the following is mentioned about the Messiah that was to be born: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us, a Son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace, there will be no end.”

1.7 In Isaiah God and His Spirit are spoken of as different Persons. Note that the Spirit of God was grieved, which indicates that the Spirit of God is a person: “I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love...But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit,” (Isaiah 63:7, 10-11 ESV).

1.8 Also in Isaiah 61 which is a Messianic prophecy, the Spirit of the Lord is referred to as something distinct from the Lord Himself: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound..” (Isaiah 61:1 ESV). All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in this passage. The Spirit of the Lord, the Lord God, and the One on whom the Spirit came upon, which was Jesus Christ as we see in the gospel of Luke (Luke 4:18).

1.9 Micah reveals the following of the Messiah, who was to be born in Bethlehem "Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2 NKJV) In other words, the one who was to be born has no beginning. Therefore He is God.

1.10 In the Book of Daniel the Son of Man is described to have an everlasting kingdom. "“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13, 14 NKJV). The Son of Man in the New Testament is revealed to be Jesus Christ!

1.11 The following was said about God and His Messiah (means Anointed One) in Psalm 2:2,7,8,9,12 “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and His anointed...I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish in the way when His wrath is kindled but a little..”

The preceding texts speak about the Son who would rule over the nations and who would judge the nations. The Son refers to the Messiah, the anointed one who was born in Bethlehem.

1.12 Psalm 45 is widely known to be a Messianic prophecy talking about the Messiah, who would reign as King in Israel. Note that in verse 7 God speaks to another person and calls the other person, or Messiah, God: “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; The peoples fall under You. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (Psalms 45:3-7 NKJV).

1.13 In Psalm 110:1 David prophesied the following about the Messiah: “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” Twice it speaks about the name Lord, which implies there is more than one Person in the Godhead. “The Lord said to my Lord.” God said that to Jesus Christ after His ascension to heaven (See Hebrews 1:13).

2. New Testament Witness.

What is implicitly taught about the Trinity in the Old Testament is explicitly taught in the New Testament.

2.1 The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mentioned in one setting when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16, 17 NKJV).

2.2 When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He said to his disciples to baptize the nations in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is also worshiped by His disciples before His ascension, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they **worshipped** Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen” (Matthew 28:16-20 NKJV).

2.3 Paul the Apostle gave a blessing at the end of his letter and refers to the Trinity. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. (II Corinthians 13:14 NKJV).

2.4 John, the Apostle in his letter to the church, said that there are three that bear witness in HEAVEN, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and these three are one (1 John 5:7-9 NKJV).

2.5 1 Corinthians speaks of the Trinity referring to one Spirit, One Lord and one God. 1 Corinthians 12:4 “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but is the same God who works all in all”.

2.6 The following is revealed about Jesus Christ in the letter to the Philippians. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal to God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.....He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Therefore God also exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the

earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:6-11).

2.7 The Letter of the Ephesians 4:4-6 reveal the following about the Trinity: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” In this passage, we see that there is one Spirit, One Lord, and one Father.

2.8 In Colossians the following is revealed about Jesus Christ: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist..”.

2.9 Jesus said that He and the Father are One, signifying there is more than one Person in the Godhead, yet that they are one in essence (John 10:30). Also, Jesus said the following to Thomas his disciple in the gospel of John: “Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father, who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.” (John 14:8-11 NKJV). It is evident from this portion that Jesus equates himself with God the Father yet tells his disciples that they are different Persons.

2.10 Jesus is the called the Word of God in the gospel of John. In the gospel of John, it says that the Word is God and that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:1-3,14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made....and the Word became

flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

2.11 Jesus refers to Himself as, "I am" in the gospel of John. That is the Name of God in the Old Testament, in Exodus. "Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:58 NKJV).

2.12 Paul refers to Jesus Christ, in the letter to the Romans, as God who should be worshiped: "of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen." (Romans 9:5 NKJV).

2.13 Jesus is sinless. (2 Corinthians 5:21; "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15 NKJV). Even in the Koran Jesus is believed to be sinless. Only God is sinless. Therefore Jesus must be God. Romans 3:23 says "we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

2.14 All judgment has been given over to Jesus. Therefore Jesus must be God. God is all knowing. "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man. (John 5:26, 27 NKJV).

2.15 Ananias and Sapphira was judged because they lied to God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called God in Acts 5:1-10.

2.16 In Hebrews 9:14 the Trinity is mentioned in one verse in the work of salvation of a sinner: “...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” The Spirit is eternal! He has no beginning.

2.17 When Thomas put his hands in Jesus’ side after Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, he said to Jesus “My Lord and my God!” Jesus did not rebuke or correct Thomas after this.

2.18 In the letter to the Hebrews the following is said about Jesus Christ: “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” Of the angels, he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” (Hebrews 1:3-9 ESV). We see clearly in this passage that Jesus is God and to be worshiped!

2.19 The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is mentioned in one context in the gospel of John in Jesus’ words : “Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words, and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me. “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:23-26 NKJV).

2.20 1 Timothy 3:16 “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” God, who was manifested, was Jesus Christ.

2.21 After the disciples went on mission and returned, The Son, The Father and the Spirit is mentioned in one context as well, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of

heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Luke 10:21-22 NKJV).

2.22 The following is said about Jesus in the second letter of Peter: ““Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:1 NKJV). Jesus is our God and Savior!

2.23 The following things are revealed about Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation: “...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:5-8 NKJV). Jesus is the one who is speaking here and refers to Himself as the Almighty. The book also ascribes glory and dominion to Jesus Christ for all eternity!

2.24 In Revelation 5:12,13 Jesus Christ is worshiped just as God the Father is worshiped. “And every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’”

3. The True Church's Witness

3.1 There have been heresies in the church throughout the centuries. The true church has always believed the same things about the Trinity. Augustine, Athanasius, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Zwingli, William Carey, Jonathan Edwards and millions more, fathers of the faith. The Great Confessions of Faith, the Apostles Creed, The Confession of Athanasius, The Confession of Nicea, Spurgeon, Martin Lloyd Jones, etc. All Protestant believers believe in the Trinity.

4.Misconceptions.

4.1 Mary is not part of the Godhead. Mary carried the Godchild Jesus, but she needed the Savior as well. She was a sinner just as the whole human race was and is. "And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:33-35 NKJV)

4.2 God didn't have sexual union (intercourse) with Mary. God is Spirit. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:21-25; Luke 1:26-37).

4.3 Christians don't serve three Gods, but one God as stated, who is simultaneously separated in three persons (Matthew 28:18-20).

4.4 The Trinity is a mystery and cannot be understood in His fullness through reasoning (1 Corinthians 13:9-12). We see in a mirror dimly but one day we will see fully.

4.5 God is three Persons at the same time. He is not sometimes the Father, then the Son and then the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16,17). Heresy of the Modalists and Brahmanites.

4.5 Jesus is not the pinnacle of Gods creation (Arian heresy). Jesus is God who created everything! (John 1:1-4).

4.6 Jesus is not the nngel Gabriel or any other angel (Heresy of the Jehova Witnesses). Jesus Christ is God, who became a human being (Romans 9:5). Jesus Christ had no beginning.

5. Conclusion

Although any parable or analogy about the Trinity is insufficient to explain God, and may be misleading, there are ways we can try to explain the Trinity. The Trinity can be explained by using the sun. The sun has a substance many millions of miles away. The sun also gives light and heat continuously. So there are three things about the sun, it's substance, it's heat and its light, yet it is one thing. What constitutes a human being? A human being consists of a body, a soul, and a spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23), yet any human being is one person, unity. You can differentiate between a person's body, soul and spirit and the body and soul and spirit have each different functions, yet you cannot actually separate them from one another. A human being consists of three parts, yet any person is one being. An atom consists of a neutron, a proton and an electron. Taking one element away would not be an atom and so it is with God.

God is one but three Persons. Each Person in the Trinity has different roles and functions, but are one in essence.

Three things we must affirm what the Bible teaches about God is:

- a) God is three Persons. He is Father, He is Son and He is Holy Spirit at the same time, eternally existent in three Persons.
- b) Each Person is fully God.
- c) God is one in essence (Wayne Grudem: Systematic Theology).

We must admit that to comprehend the Godhead or the Trinity or Tri-unity fully is impossible. It is like dogs or lions trying to understand the functioning of a computer or the human brain. God is infinitely greater than human beings, and therefore it would be presumptions to think that we can fully comprehend God. We can never put ourselves on God's level. His understanding is infinite. His thoughts are above our thoughts. His ways are past finding out. We will always fall short

to comprehend God fully, yet God has revealed enough for us to know Him personally through the Holy Spirit by faith because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. We also know enough about God to make us accountable towards Him and responsible for our actions. Although our knowledge is limited, we can affirm what the Bible affirms and rest in that. The secret things belong to God, but the revealed things belong to our children and us forever (Deuteronomy 29:29).

God the Father sent his Son Jesus Christ (the exact representation of His nature [Hebrews 1:3]) to this earth, in time, about 2000 years ago to live a sinless life, obtain and exhibit righteousness, die as our substitute for our sins at the cross, bear the wrath of God for sin, satisfy His Justice, rose from the dead and thereby defeated death, sin, and Satan so that we can be forgiven, redeemed and reconciled to God for eternity. God promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to live inside of us forever if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. If Jesus Christ wasn't God, then His death on the cross couldn't take our sins away. Only God can take our sins away; only God could atone for our sins. Therefore Jesus had to be God.