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We Believe God Is Triune

The word “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible

The notion of Trinitarianism came to be formalized as doctrine in the 2nd century AD (Council of Nicea), to refute the Arian controversy (Jesus was born of God the Father at some point in time, therefore below the Father. Begotten of Unbegotten.)

But, reading through the Bible, the idea of a Triune God is almost taken for granted.

Genesis 1:26 *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

Matthew 3:16-17 *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 28:19 *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

Jude 20-21 *But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.*

God is One, yet 3 persons

“Nature,” “Essence” - what God is

“Persons” - who God is

Isaiah 45:5 *I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me.*

LORD - YHWH (Yahweh) “I Am”

Vowels (from “Edonai” - “Lord”) added in the early (4-6th) centuries = Jehovah

When you see LORD (all capitals) it is YHWH in the original language

3rd century BC Jews stopped uttering the name of God - too holy to be spoken

When you see Lord, it usually (though not always) refers to the Father

Each person of the Trinity is fully God

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*

Colossians 2:9 *For in Him (Jesus) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*

John 20:28 *Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"*

The Jewish religious authorities wanted Jesus put to death primarily because He claimed to be God.

John 8:58 *Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.*

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? 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 man but to God."*

Each person of the Trinity is not the other

Look at the example of Creation

God the Father spoke

Genesis 1:9-10 *And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land "Earth," and the waters that were gathered together he called "Seas". And God saw that it was good.*

God the Son carried out the Father's words

John 1:3 *All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.*

God the Holy Spirit hovered over (sustaining and manifesting God's presence)

Genesis 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.*

Look at our salvation

God the Father sent the Son

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

God the Son went to be the atoning sacrifice

The Son is obedient to the Father

Hebrews 10:9-10 *Then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

God the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son

The Spirit is obedient to both the Father and the Son

John 14:16, 16:7 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever...Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go*

away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

All fully God, yet distinct in how each relates to each other and to Creation

Undivided yet Interpersonal

How do we evidence God's triune unity? Unity in diversity?

In marriage

Ephesians 5:31 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*

In the Church

1 Corinthians 12:12 *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*

Revelation 7:9-10 *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

Side Note: So how does prayer work?

We pray to the Father

We pray by/through the Son

We pray in (empowered) by the Spirit

But we can also pray directly to Jesus, and/or to the Spirit

How can we, as image bearers, live a Trinitarian life? What are the implications?

Humility - The doctrine of the Trinity is complex and mysterious. While God can be truly known, He cannot be fully known. That should humble us.

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

Loving - The doctrine of the Trinity results in our gospel capacity to love others

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*

This says that God is the source of love, it emanates from Him

The results in love for God, family, friends, neighbors, strangers, even enemies

Worshipful - the doctrine of the Trinity causes us to worship God, not ourselves

We worship (singing, serving, praying) to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit

Relational - the doctrine of the Trinity is one connected to another in relationship
John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Literally face-to-face in eternity past

This is the language of friendship, companionship, community

Christians evidence this by being hospitable, and connecting with their church

Unified and Diverse - the doctrine of the Trinity is unified and diverse

Ancient Greek Christian theologians used a term for this which meant

“mutually indwelling” or “permeating one another”

As Christians, we live this out by being unified while retaining our own

Distinctives. We are always people in community.

When we were adopted by the Father, He adopted us into His Family

(You can't have one without the other)

Mutually Submissive - the doctrine of the Trinity is one of glad submission

Luke 22:42 *...Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*

Joyful - the doctrine of the Trinity should result in our joy

To “glorify” something or someone is praise, to enjoy and delight in them

When something is useful, you're attracted to it for its benefits

When something is beautiful, you enjoy it simply for what it is

To be in its presence is its own reward

To glorify someone is also to give deference, to serve them

Our joy is bound up (a result of) their joy

Each member of the Trinity finds their greatest joy in each other

God is a relational God who was already in loving, joyful community before Creation

But He invites us into His community, relationship with Himself

A relationship with the Father we enter into by the Spirit through the Son