

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THE TRINITY¹

The Bible clearly teaches that man is not able to comprehend God in His fullness! (e.g. Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33-35). So we would be well advised to emulate the attitude and humility of Job (Job 42:2-6). Just because a person can't understand something, doesn't mean it's not true. Many people don't understand electricity, computers, nuclear physics, atomic theory, cell phone technology, or a host of other things-but they still believe in them &/or use them.

1) **All three (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) are clearly called "God" in the Bible:** a) *Father*-2 Pet. 1:17; Rom. 1:7; b) *Son*-Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:17-18 cf. Isa. 44:6; etc.²; c) *Holy Spirit*-Acts 5:3-4; Heb. 9:14.

(2) **All three are repeatedly associated together throughout the New Testament:** a) *At Christ's birth*-Lk. 1:35; b) *At His baptism*-Matt. 3:16-17; c) *In the Great Commission*-28:19 [Note, in particular, the use of the singular 'name.' Since three names & individuals are mentioned there, to command to baptize in the 'name' clearly implies that the three are one]; d) *In a salutation*-2 Cor. 13:14; e) *In regard to Christ's resurrection*-1 Thess. 9-10, Rom. 8:11, Jn. 2:19-21; f) *In regard to spiritual gifts*-I Cor. 12:4-6.

(3) **There are clear Old Testament intimations of a plurality in the Godhead.** A theologian once likened the situation in regard to the teaching of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament vs. that in the New Testament, as being similar to a person sitting in a dimly lit room and describing its contents, as opposed to sitting in that same room and describing its contents when bright lights are turned on. Nothing has been added to the room when the brighter lights are turned on, but the individual sees more, due to the increased visibility. So too, in the Old Testament the doctrine of the Trinity appears only subtly. But that doctrine is revealed in complete clarity as the New Testament revelation is added to it. Nevertheless, there are a number of very definite intimations of a *plurality* in the Godhead that can be seen even in the OT. We can't say with absolute certainty until we get to the NT exactly *how many* persons there are in the Godhead (though there are definitely intimations even in the OT that the number is three e.g. triple blessings-Num. 6:24-26; triple statements-Isa. 6:3; etc.), but there is no question that there is more than one person. Here are some of the OT evidences:

a) **The very first name for God: "Elohim"** – Gen. 1:1. "'El' is the Hebrew word for God, but in this case we have a suffix added. The 'im' in Elohim is a full suffix added to the singular noun 'El' to give the intimation of plurality within the one God."³

b) **Plural nouns & pronouns in reference to God** – Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8. Please note the interchange in each instance between the *singular* & *plural* (e.g. Gen. 1:26 cf. v. 27; 11:7 cf. v. 8; Isa. 6:8 cf. v. 9).

c) **The word "one"** – Dt. 6:4 "*the Lord our God is one Lord.*" It should be carefully noted that in the Old Testament there are two different Hebrew words used for and translated "one." Significantly, the term used *in every case* in reference to God being "one," is the Hebrew term "*echad*," or its root "*ached*." This word has the idea of a *unity*, and the intimation is there in the Hebrew language of the possibility of even a large group of people still being called one! 'The Hebrew word for "one" in the absolute sense, as used in such expressions as "*the only one*" is "*yacheed*" and is never used in the Hebrew Old Testament to express the unity of the Godhead. On the contrary, the term "*echad*" which denotes a compound unity is used for that purpose (e.g. *one flesh*-Gen. 2:24; *one voice*-Ex. 24:3; The pieces of the Tabernacle are called *one*-Ex. 26:11; soldiers are described as smiting the enemy *as one man*-Judges 6:16; we are told that two sticks shall become *one*-Ezek. 37:19). Another word used for "one" is the Hebrew word '*yachiyd*' or its root '*yachad*.' This word denotes the idea of an absolute one e.g. Isaac's only (*yachad*) son. [*& is never used in reference to God*]"⁴

An illustration. We must not try to prove the doctrine of the Trinity with an illustration. A number of believers have made that mistake. No illustration is adequate to explain the Trinity, and all of them ultimately break down at some point, upon close scrutiny. Rather, we build a case for the Trinity from the Word of God! However, perhaps the best illustration of how three could be one at the same time is something in science called the "*Triple-Point of Water*."⁵ "Take some water, put it in a vacuum tube under 230mm of gas pressure. Lower the temperature to 0 degrees centigrade, then watch what happens when the temperature hits zero. *All three occur at once, with no contradiction.*"⁶

¹ A brief survey by Mike Edwards, Bible Baptist Church, Madison, Ohio, 2016.

² For a much fuller treatment of the biblical arguments & evidence that Christ is God, see my paper on that subject.—*mwe*

³ Edwards, "*The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity*" (unpublished paper, Madison, Ohio, 1980), p. 4

⁴ Edwards, *ibid.* Interior quote from Emery Bancroft, "*Elemental Theology-Doctrinal and Conservative*" (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), p. 37. See also Robert Gromacki, "*The Virgin Birth, Doctrine of Deity*" (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1974), p. 20.

⁵ "Water is an example of a heterogeneous chemical system of one component. The liquid and gas phases, water and water vapor, coexist over a wide range of temperatures and pressures. (But) at one temperature and pressure, called the triple point, all three phases—water (liquid), water vapor (gas), and ice (solid) coexist at equilibrium." Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 99, "Phase Rule", 1998 edition, p. 1.

⁶ Ron Carlson, videotape lecture, n.d.