

## Summary...

The Bible clearly teaches us that God exists in both oneness and the plurality of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to completely understand all the ramifications and implications of this truth. One must acknowledge that the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery and, like much we believe about God, goes beyond our human understanding. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us that, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of the law." God has revealed more than enough about the doctrine of the trinity and can be accepted with confidence as truth.



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What God's Word says about

# The Trinity

*Making More and Better  
Disciples of Jesus Christ*

# A Biblical Case for the doctrine of the Trinity

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” Matthew 28:19*

## The Trinity of God

The doctrine of the Trinity of God is one of the most important and yet complicated concepts taught in scripture. It is important because it deals with the very nature of God and can be complicated because the word Trinity is not found in scripture. Yet, the Bible teaches the Trinitarian nature of God. Simply stated, God is made up of three distinct Persons with distinct functions: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

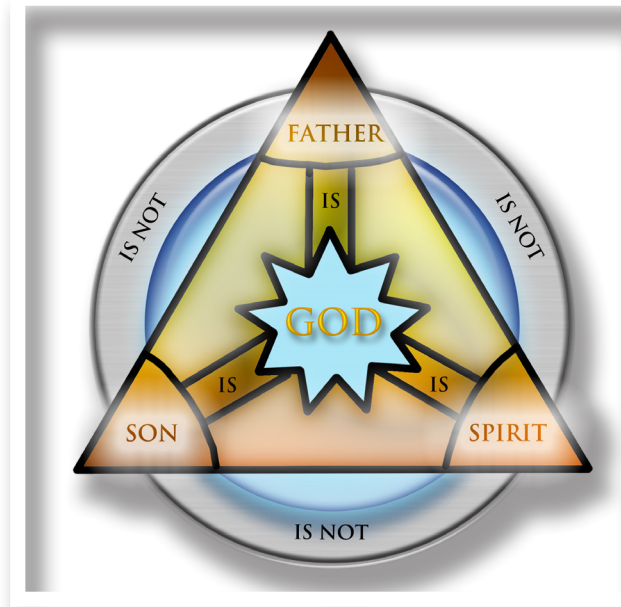
Looking at both the Old and New Testaments will help to define and illustrate the Trinity in a way that brings clarity and understanding. Scripture provides very convincing and defensible proof for the reality of the Trinity.

### 1. Both the oneness and Plurality of God are taught in the Old Testament. The Old Testament clearly suggests that there are three persons in the Godhead. While God exists as one, He is manifested in different ways.

- EVIDENCE FOR THE ONENESS OF GOD. The oneness of God (monotheism) is a constant theme in Old Testament scripture. One need go no further than Judaism’s basic confession of faith. “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” Deuteronomy 6:4; Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 4:35; 32:29; Isaiah 45:14 and 46:9 all insist on Israel’s loyalty to the concept of the oneness of God.
- EVIDENCE FOR THE TRIUNE NATURE OF GOD. We also see several instances where God is referred to as more than one. When God speaks of Himself with plural pronouns (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; John 10:30), it indicates that there is more than one person represented within the oneness of God.

### 2. The New Testament teaches both the Oneness of God and the plurality of God in three distinct persons.

- EVIDENCE FOR THE ONENESS OF GOD. The New Testament also insists that there is only one true God. Passages



like 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 4:3-6; and James 2:19 clearly assert this truth.

- EVIDENCE FOR THE TRIUNE NATURE OF GOD.
  - a. The Father is recognized as God. No real debate exists here, and a number of passages teach this concept clearly (John 6:27; 1 Peter 1:2)
  - b. Jesus Christ is recognized as God. Jesus Himself claims attributes that only God possesses, such as being all-knowing, omniscient (Matt. 9:4), all-powerful, omnipotent (Matt. 28:18), and everywhere all the time, omnipresent (Matt. 28:20). Furthermore, the writers of the New Testament assign other works to Jesus that only God can perform, such as forgiving sins (Mark 2:1-12), upholding all things (Col. 1:17), creation (John 1:3), and the future judgment of all mankind (John 5:27). John 1:1, 16 clearly teach that Jesus is God. John 1:1 reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In verse 16, John reveals the identity of the Word when He refers to Jesus saying, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling with us.” John could not have chosen a more precise way of expressing the truths that the Word (Jesus) was God and yet was distinct from the Father.

c. The Holy Spirit is recognized as God. He is called God (Acts 5:3-4); He possesses attributes that only God has, such as omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10), omnipresence (6:19), and He regenerates people (John 3:5-6, 8), an exclusive work of God Himself. Also at the birth of Christ we see the Holy Spirit and God as one (Luke 1:35).

- EVIDENCE FOR TRINITY. Some of the most compelling reasons for belief in the trinity are several very clear statements in the New Testament that seem to put the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit together or deity. Matthew 28:19 best states both the oneness and three persons of God, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” We also see the three together and yet separate at Jesus’ baptism. In Matthew 3:13-17, Jesus is baptized by John and we read, “At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him (Jesus). And a voice from heaven said, ‘this is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’ “ Additional passages such as II Corinthians 13:14 and 1 Peter 1:2 also associate the three persons of the Trinity equally.

Though the Old and New Testaments contain no explicit statement for the doctrine of the Trinity, nor is the term used, yet they contain a great deal of evidence which points to the reality of the Triune Godhead.

### 3. The Definition of the Trinity.

Theologian B.B. Warfield defines the concept of the Trinity this way: “There is only one true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence.” In other words, in John 10:30 Jesus declares, “I and the Father are one.” This definitive statement clearly distinguishes two persons, while the verb, “We are” is also plural. “One” establishes that while distinct and separate in many ways they are still one in nature or essence. Thus the Lord distinguishes Himself from the Father and yet claimed unity and equality with the Father.

### 4. Illustrating the Trinity

The challenge in trying to illustrate the Trinity is that no illustration can possibly capture all that is involved in the biblical revelation of the Trinity. The diagram to the left attempts to picture the Godhead as one, yet showing each Person as God and also distinct.