

The Trinity

by Sebastian R. Fama

There is only one God. That one God, is comprised of three persons. There is no contradiction here. If we said that He was one being and three beings or one person and three persons that would be contradictory. But we are not saying that. Nor are we saying that the one God presents Himself in three different ways. To be sure there is a mystery involved. But that does not mean that we cannot know it to be true. Only that we cannot fully understand it.

The Nicene Creed says that Jesus is “begotten not made, one in being with the Father.” It also says that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” Some think that means that the Son and the Holy Spirit came later? But that cannot be as it would mean that there was a time when God was not complete. The Creed also says that Jesus is true God from True God. And as such he would have all the attributes of “true God.”

But how could the Son have been begotten by the Father and at the same time be eternally coexistent? Nature itself gives us a hint. You can light one candle from another. The second flame can be said to proceed from the first. And yet both flames are of the same substance and are the same age. When you hold the flames together, they are one. Pull them apart and they are distinctly two. We can say the second flame was begotten not made and one with the other. The same can be said if we include a third flame.

A perfect and all-powerful God does not need anything or anyone. If He were dependent on anyone or anything He would not be perfect or all powerful. It stands to reason that a perfect God would be perfectly loving. But as Richard of St. Victor notes, love needs an object. And if God is going to be independent and perfectly loving the object of His love would have to be another person within Himself. God’s love is creative and life giving so it naturally manifests itself in a third person. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity is reasonable and to be expected.

Scripture is clear on the fact that there is but one God. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed: “You are my witnesses” says the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. **Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me**” (43:10).

The Bible is also clear on the fact that anyone else who is referred to as a god is a false god and in reality, no god at all. Paul tells us the following in his first letter to the Corinthians:

“**There is no God but one.**” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords” – **yet for us there is one God**, the Father, from whom all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (8:4-6).

Note the last line. It says there is “one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” The book of Colossians goes even further: “**For in Him [Jesus] all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – **all things were created through Him and for Him** (1:16). The Bible teaches us in several places that it was God who created all things (see Revelation 4:11). Unless Jesus is God how can all things be created through Him?

Even the Old Testament presents us with evidence that supports the doctrine of the Trinity. Before man was ever created, God said: “Let us make man in **our image**.... So, God created man in **His own image**” (Genesis 1:26-27). At the Tower of Babel God said: “**Let us go down**, and there confuse their language... **So, the Lord** scattered them abroad” (Genesis 11:7). Notice how singular and plural terms are used interchangeably for the one true God?

But doesn’t Scripture portray Jesus as a man who is subordinate to God? Yes, it does but there is no contradiction here. Jesus came to earth as a man to offer Himself up for our sins. This is called the Incarnation. As such He was fully human and fully divine. In His human nature He was subordinate to the Father. In His Divine nature He was one with the Father (John 10:30).

Isaiah predicts the birth of Jesus with these words: "For to us a child is born, to 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**" (9:5-6). **Mighty God, Everlasting Father?** There is only one way to interpret that statement. Jesus is God.

In Isaiah 44:6 God the Father says: "**I am the first and I am the last**; besides me there is no god." In Revelation 1:17 Jesus says: "Fear not **I am the first and the last.**" God the Father said: "**I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior**" Peter said: "**Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**" (2 Peter 1:11).

In Exodus 3:14-15 God says to Moses: "I AM who I AM" And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: this is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."

The Hebrew word rendered as "I AM" is recorded as YHWH. As a sign of respect, the vowels were removed from God's name so that no one would repeat it. It was felt that no one was worthy to speak the name of God. The name "I AM" is more a reflection of what the proper name of God means rather than the actual name itself. Yahweh and Jehovah are two guesses at what the original name was. For the sake of argument, I will use Jehovah.

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Jehoshua." Jehoshua is usually shortened to Joshua or Jeshua. In the east names are more than a label. Quite often they tell us something about the person. The name Jehoshua comes from two Hebrew words; Jehovah (the proper name of God) and hoshea (saving). So, Jesus or Jehoshua literally means Jehovah our salvation.

The first of the Ten Commandments forbids us from worshipping anyone other than the one true God (Exodus 20:2-6). In Revelation 7:11 we read the following: "And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and **worshipped God.**" Here we see the residents of heaven worshipping the one true God.

The Greek word rendered as worship is proskuneo (προσκύνησαν). It literally means worshipped. The following New Testament verses use the same Greek word in relation to Jesus:

1. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and **took hold of His feet and worshipped Him** (Matthew 28:9).
2. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they **worshipped Him** (Matthew 28:16-17).
3. And those in the boat **worshipped Him**, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33).

Conclusion; Scripture tells us we can only worship the one true God. Scripture also tells us that we can worship Jesus. Thus, Jesus must be God. Acts 5:3-4 tells us that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God. In 2 Corinthians 3:17 we are told that the Lord is the Spirit. Finally in Hebrews 3:7-9 the Holy Spirit claims to be God:

Therefore, as **the Holy Spirit says**, "Today when you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing **in the wilderness**, where your fathers put **me to the test and saw my works for forty years.**"

Referring to the same event Deuteronomy 8:2 says: "And you shall remember all the way which **the Lord your God** has led you these **forty years in the wilderness.**"

One verse says it was the Holy Spirit and the other says it was God. Thus, the Holy Spirit is God. And so we see that there is only one God. We also see that the Father is God, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God. And that is the doctrine of the Trinity.