

Offensive elements of Biblical Christianity

Offenses to the individual

- **The total depravity of man**
- **Justification by faith not merit**

Offenses to the general culture

- **The supernatural resurrection**
- **The blood atonement for sin**

Offenses to the religious world

- **The exclusiveness of the Gospel**
- **The Trinity**

The Trinity

**Does it make sense?
Is it Biblical?
Does it matter?**

The case against the Trinity doctrine.

1. The word "trinity" does not appear in the Bible.
2. Those who teach the doctrine admit it is a mystery.
3. It is not reasonable.
4. It is not known to the writers of the OT or NT.
5. It is dated about 350 years after Christ.
6. The Jesus of the Gospels was not equal with the Father.
 - **Mk.13:32** Only the Father knows some things.
 - **Lk.22:41-42** Jesus prays to the Father.
 - **Jn.14:28** "the Father is greater than I"
 - **Jn.20:17** "My God"
 - **1 Cor.11:3** God is still the head of Christ.
 - **1 Cor.15:28** The Son is still subject to God.

1 Timothy 2:5

"For there is **one God**, and one mediator also between God and men, **the man** Christ Jesus,"

7. By definition Jesus could not be God.

- **God is not visible.** Jesus was visible.
- **God is not changeable.** Jesus changed forms.
- **God is not a man.** Jesus was a man.
- **God is not physical.** Jesus was flesh and bones.
- **God submits to no one.** Jesus submitted to God.
- **God is not mortal.** Jesus died.
- **God cannot sin.** Jesus became sin for others.
- **God cannot be tempted.** Jesus was tempted.
- **God is all-powerful.** Jesus couldn't carry the cross.
- **God is everywhere.** Jesus lived in space & time.
- **God is all knowing.** Jesus learned.
- **God is tireless.** Jesus slept.

8. The texts used to support the Trinity can be answered.

- **Jn.10:30** "I and My Father are one" (In **Jn.17:22** "... that they may all be one just as we are one.")
- **Jn.1:1** "The Word was God" ("with God", "no one has seen God" vs.18)
- **1 Jn.5:6-8** "There are three that bear witness, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit." (these words are found in texts only after the 16th century).
- **Matt.28:19** "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (all records of baptisms in the early church are in the name of "Jesus" - **Acts 2:38, 8:15, 10:48, 19:5**)

9. The origin of the Trinity can be traced to other sources.

- a. **Babylonian** trinity - Venus, moon, sun
- b. **Hindu** trinity - Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva
- c. **Greek** trinity - Zeus, Athena, Apollo
- d. **Roman** trinity - Jupiter, Mercury, Venus

Why do Christians believe this?



Matt.28:19

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name (**singular**) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.

1. It is a clear deduction from Scripture.

1. There is but one God.

Deut.6:4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord **is one!**”;
1 Tim.2:5 “For there is **one God**, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

2. There are suggestions that God is plurality.

Gen.1:26 “Then God said, ‘Let **Us** make man in **Our** image’”,
Isa.6:8 “Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall **I** send, and who will go for **Us**?’”

3. There are suggestions that God is tri-unity.

Isa.48:12,16 “Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; **I am He, I am the first, I am also the last** . . . And now the Lord God has sent **Me**, and **His Spirit**.”
Matt.28:19 “baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**.”

4. The Holy Spirit is described as God.

- **ACTS 5:3,4** “lie to the H.S.” - “not to men, but to God”
- **2 Cor.3:17,18** “Now the Lord is the Spirit”

5. Jesus is described as God.

- **Jn.1:1** “and the Word was God”
- **Jn.1:18** “the only begotten God”
- **Jn.20:28** “my Lord and my God”
- **Titus 2:13** “of our God and Savior Jesus Christ”

He claimed to possess what properly belongs only to God.

- “his angels” Matt.13:41;
- “his kingdom” Matt.12:28;
- “his elect” Mk.13:20;
- power to forgive sins Mk.2:8-10

Jesus is equated with the YHWH of the Old Testament.

Jehovah

- Ps. 45:6**
- Isa. 40:3**
- Joel 2:32**
- Isa. 8:13-14**
- Isa. 44:6, 48:12**
- Ps. 97:9**
- Ps. 24:7, 29:3**
- Isa. 8:13**
- Deut. 10:17**
- Isa. 45:22-23**
- Isa. 49:26**
- Isa. 45:18**

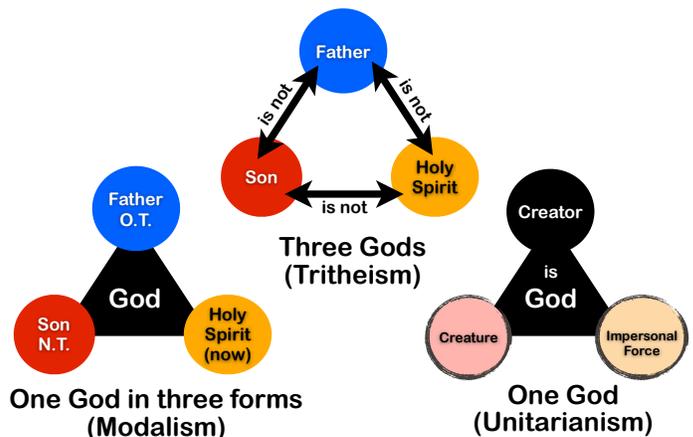
Jesus

- Heb. 1:8** “But of the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.”
- Matt. 3:3** “Make ready the way of the Lord.”
- Acts 2:21** “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- 1 Pet. 2:6-8; Rom. 9:33** “The Lord of hosts is “a rock to stumble over”
- Rev. 1:17-18, 22:12-13** “the first and the last”
- Jn. 3:31** “He is above all”
- Jas. 2:1; 1 Cor. 2:8** “Lord of glory”
- 1 Pet. 3:15** The Lord of hosts is sacred.
- 1 Tim. 6:15-16** “the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of Kings ...”
- Phil. 2:10-11** “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.”
- Jn. 4:24** Jehovah is Savior and Redeemer
- Rev. 4:11; Jn. 1:3** Creator

Philippians 2

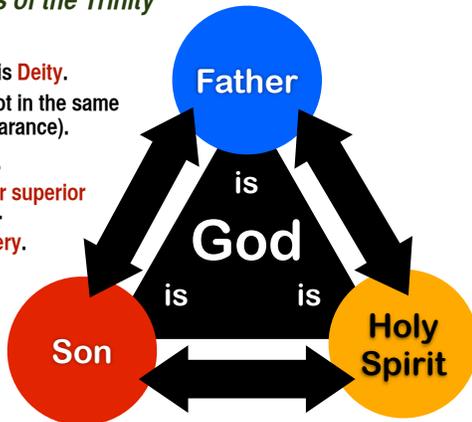
“... although He existed in the form of God, (he) did not regard **equality with God** a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.** ⁸ **And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** ⁹ Therefore also **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,** ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**”

It is easier to misrepresent the Godhead than to express the Trinity accurately.



Essential elements of the Trinity

1. God is **One**.
2. **Each** of the persons is **Deity**.
3. One and Three are not in the same **aspect** (form or appearance).
4. The Trinity is **eternal**.
5. There is **no inferior or superior** person in the Trinity.
6. The Trinity is a **mystery**.

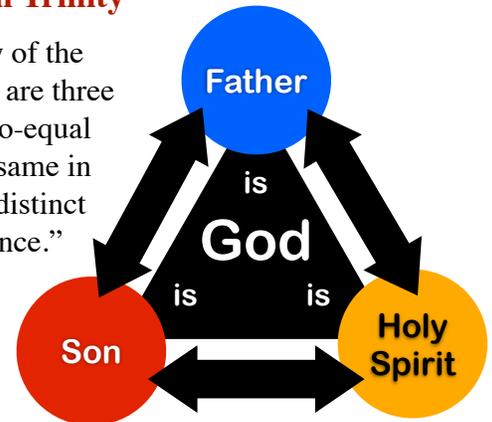


Council of Nicea
A.D. 325

Council of Constantinople
A.D. 381

The Christian Trinity

“In the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal persons, the same in essence but distinct in subsistence.”

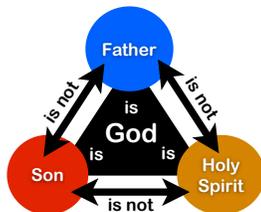
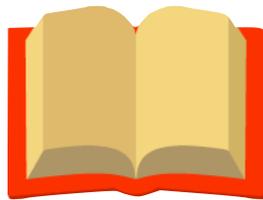


Romans

God the Father
(judgment)
1:18-3:20

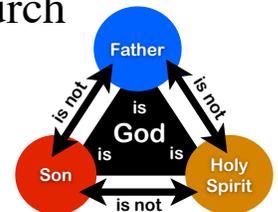
God the Son
(justification)
3:21-8:1

God the Spirit
(life ministry)
8:2-30



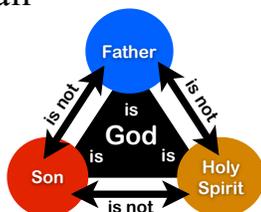
Acts 20:28

“Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the **Holy Spirit** has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of **God**, which he bought with **his own blood**.”



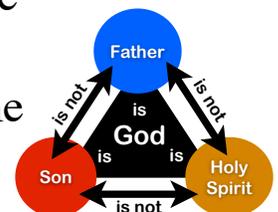
1 Corinthians 8:5-6

“⁵ For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, ⁶ yet for us there is but one **God, the Father**, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one **Lord, Jesus Christ**, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.



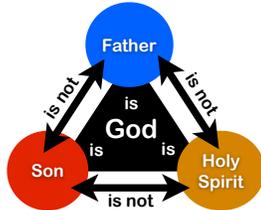
1 Corinthians 12:4-6

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. There are different kinds of service, but the same **Lord**. There are different kinds of working, but the same **God** works all of them in all men.”



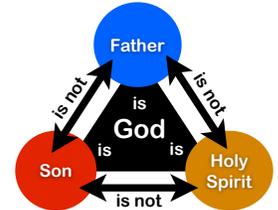
2 Corinthians 13:14

“May the grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all.”



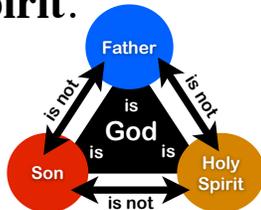
Galatians 4:6

“Because you are sons, **God** sent the **Spirit** of his **Son** into our hearts, the **Spirit** who calls out ‘*Abba, Father*’.”



Matthew 28:19

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



Genesis 1:26

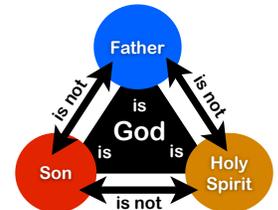
“Then **God** said, ‘Let **Us** make man in **Our** image.’”

אלהים

“**Elohim**”

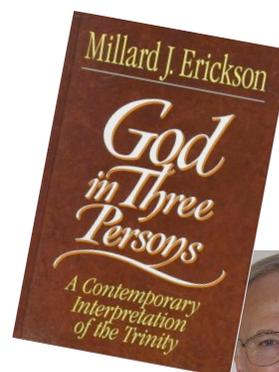
is plural
(majesty) “after 200 AD.”
(editorial) “modern concept”
(quantitative plural) “water”

(trinity) ?

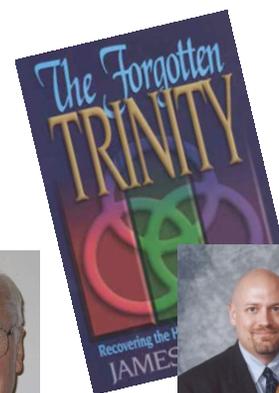


My personal practice

- I seldom refer to the Trinity because the Bible does not do so.
- I believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God but prefer to refer to him as the Scripture does.
- I believe that the Trinity holds valuable implications for Christian practical theology but they are subtle.



Millard J. Erickson



James R. White