

The Trinity —The Plural One

The Trinity is a topic that many believers accept without really understanding what Scripture teaches about it. In this study, we want to look in depth at the Trinity in Scripture. We want you to see for yourself what the Bible teaches about our three in one or triune God. The question we want to start with today is: why do you believe in the Trinity?

PROBLEM WITH 1 JOHN 5:7. Some answers that I have received are, “My pastor said here is a Trinity.” Do you believe in a Trinity just because someone has taught you that there is a Trinity? What passage in the Bible would you turn to in order to show someone that God is a Trinity? Somebody might say, “I like 1 John 5:7.”

In the King James Bible, that verse says, “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” It is the last part of this verse in which people are really interested. When I have talked to people who have a King James Bible about the Trinity, they will often refer to 1 John 5:7. They want to make the point that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one. The only problem with 1 John 5:7 is that the verse is not in the best manuscripts.

When the King James Bible was translated from the Greek, the translator was challenged to find a verse that proved that God was a Trinity and to put it into the Bible. He agreed

that he would. He found this statement in an obscure Greek manuscript, and that is why it is in the King James Bible in 1 John 5:7. What is really telling is that the early church fathers Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Athanasius quote 1 John 5:7, but their quotes of the passage do not agree with the wording in the King James Bible. This is additional evidence that the wording in the King James Bible is wrong. The Bible doesn’t teach the Trinity in that particular verse.

TRINITY IS IMPLIED. Some might suggest Matthew 3:16, the baptism of Christ. This is a very commonly quoted passage to support the Trinity. In Matthew 3:16, Jesus has come to

John the Baptist by the Jordan River to be baptized. Feeling unworthy, John initially does not want to baptize Jesus but agrees to do so. Verse 16 says,

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him. Matthew 3:16 (NASB)

Some people say, “You see? There is

God the Father, Jesus in the water, and the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven. There is the Trinity.” While I agree that verse refers to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, it doesn’t tell us that it is the Trinity. This verse could refer to three Gods! This does not state whether it is speaking



of three Gods or one God. All it tells us is that the Father, the Son and the Spirit were present. You have no clear statement they are three in one. Some will reference Matthew 28:19. Does Matthew 28:19 prove the Trinity?

This is one of the last verses in the book of Matthew. Jesus is getting ready to ascend back to heaven. He is speaking to His disciples and says,

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19 (NASB)

Again this passage does not tell us that God is three in one. It just says there is a Father, a Son and a Holy Spirit. That could be three Gods, which is what some of the cults say. You find the same in 2 Corinthians 13:14: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. These cited passages just list the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

THE WORD TRINITY IS NOT IN THE BIBLE. Why then do we believe in the Trinity? The word “Trinity” does not appear in the New or Old Testaments. Believing in a Trinity just because your pastor said it is true is not a good reason. It might be an accurate one, but it is not a good reason. May I make a suggestion?

One of the reasons that the Scriptures do not tell us a lot of things about God, is that God wants us to go searching and learning to finding out who He is and what He is like. Have you ever asked yourself why the Bible does not just list all of God’s attributes: God is holy, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, God is love, merciful, patient, etc.

Why is there not just one chapter with a list of all the attributes of God? Why do we have to read the Bible and discover in Daniel 1:2 that God is sovereign? Why do I have to go there to find that? Why do we have to read and study so much of the Bible to find out who God is and what He is like?

GOD HIDES HIMSELF. He wants you to go looking! God has not made it easy. Look at Isaiah 45:15. God is being described here in a very special way. Isaiah said,

Truly, you are a God who, hides Himself. A God of Israel, Savior. Isaiah 45:15 (NASB)

Isaiah the prophet told us that God hides Himself. Why would He hide Himself? When you look up at the sky, do you see God? We can see the stars and the planets and they tell us about God. God told Moses “You can’t see my face, you can only see my back.” Why does He do that? Why doesn’t He just show Himself to us? In Matthew 6:6,18, Matthew, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that God is a God who is in secret. He has chosen to not show Himself to you or to me.

Again in 1 Timothy 1:17, we read that He is the invisible God. Because He is invisible, you can not see Him. So, how do you find out who He is? God wants you to look for Him, to be searching for Him.

Jeremiah 29:12 says, “And then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me and I will listen to you and you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart, and I will be found by you.” God says, “You have to come and search. You have to come and seek. When you do it with all your heart and are really serious about it, wanting to find out who I am, then I will let you find Me.” God does not just tell you that He is triune because He wants you to search that out.

He wants you to seek with all your heart, and you will discover that He is sovereign, He is love, and He is holy. You will learn all of the attributes God has and you will find out He is a Trinity. We humans want all the truth just handed out to us. But God wants us to be looking, to be searching and seeking Him. Jeremiah says, “seeking with all your heart.” If you will, you will discover the thrill that comes in the finding. What I have found is that the thrill is in the searching and the seeking and the finding. It is like finding treasure.

THE TRINITY IS IMPLIED. We want to talk now about the Trinity. I want to help you put this all together. We are really trying to seek and to search this out on our own. We looked through all of the Old and New Testaments. We found many verses that reveal some of who God is and that He is a Trinity. We will look at some of them. The Bible does not just say, “God is a Trinity”. What the Bible does is drop clues through the Old Testament and all through the New Testament. When we finish this study I trust that you will understand the process. In Genesis 1:1, 2 we get the very first clues about who God is.

Genesis 1:1-2 — First Clue. Genesis 1 is about the creation. Genesis 1 is also about who God is because it says “In the beginning God.” That assumes God exists. It tells us that God is. So, if you didn’t know that there was a God and you are reading Genesis 1:1, all of a sudden you understand God exists. There is a God. As you continue reading in verse 2, it says,

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Genesis 1:2 (NASB)

In verse 2, we learn of a being called the Spirit of God. Who is that?

If you have been a Christian very long, you already know who that is. Yes, but if you were not a Christian and you read that, you would have no idea who the Spirit of God is. When you get to verse 26, you find another clue. There it says,

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image.” Genesis 1:26 (NASB)

“Us” and “our” imply plurality. It implies that there is someone else more than God. At least that is the way you might look at it. But when He says “us” or “our”, He makes Himself part of a group. I have already made the point that if you have been a Christian for a while, you already have the answers. But if you were not a Christian, this is just another nugget of information.

So, now in this passage we have been introduced to God, the Spirit of God, and to “us” or “our”. Now the question is, “How do you put all of these nuggets of information together?” The point I am trying to make is that God does not come out and say, “I am a Trinity.” God gives us these clues along the way and He wants you to be seeking and searching with all your heart to understand Him and to know Him.

If you will do that, He will reveal Himself to you. But most of us want truth catered to us. We want to buy a book at Ebay, Amazon or Barnes and Noble and have somebody tell us all the details instead of searching them out. But the thrill is in the digging for the truth.

DEUTERONOMY 4:35 — MAJOR CLUE. Deuteronomy 4:35 is another major clue along the way. Moses has written: “To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God and there is no other besides Him.” Moses told us there is no other God. Now we have these pieces of information - there is God. There is the Spirit of God and there are the plural pronouns, “our” and “us.” Now, all of a sudden, we are told that there is nobody else, but God. So, who is this “our” and the “us?” If there is only one God and there is only God, how do you explain that? Now let us read Deuteronomy 6:4. This is called the Great Shema. The Jews call this the Great Shema because it makes a statement about who God is - that is the reason it is great. It says, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.”

Do you see the words “Lord” in here? Each of those words have a capital “L” with a lower case “ord”; there are two of them. The Hebrew word behind that is Yahweh. So, we could rewrite it this way: “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God and Yahweh is one.” That is important. You think about “Yahweh is our God and Yahweh is one,” it tells you that Yahweh is one and there is no one else.

Now the word for God is Elohim. That is really interesting because the “im” at the end of the word implies plurality. We were told that Yahweh is a plural God. Oh, wow! That’s interesting information. Then the next word we are interested in is “one.” In the Hebrew there are two different words for one. One Hebrew word means one, as opposed to two, three, four or five. Then there is another Hebrew word – Ehad - and that word means one with diversity. That is important because that is the word that is used here. It is one with diversity. At this point, we are supposed to understand that Yahweh is Elohim. Yahweh is one with diversity. That is a definite indication for us that there is a Trinity. It is a huge clue! In summary, all we have here is the clue that there is God and He is plural. I like the phrase, “The plural one.” I do not know that I have ever heard anybody else say that, but I like the statement, “God is a plural one.” It really makes the point that there is a plural one. That is who God is. God is a plural one.

Psalms 45:6 — Another Clue. Psalm 45:6-7 is the third major clue. The writer of this Psalm writes, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of uprightness is the scepter

ter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Now listen to the words, “Therefore God, your God has anointed You.”

This is unbelievable! We are told “Therefore God, Your God. . .” That gives us a clue about God. There is a relationship between God and God. Now remember what Deuteronomy said! There is only one God. In Deuteronomy 4, we have already been told there is one God. So now what does this mean? “God, Your God” This cannot be two Gods! This cannot be three Gods! We have already been told there is only one God and God is Your God. So this is really fascinating information.

THE TRINITY IS PROVEN. The fourth clue is in Isaiah 43. Now this is going to begin a long exercise. So you are going to have to hang with me. In my view this is probably the most significant passage in all of Scripture with regards to proving the Trinity. Isaiah 43:10 says,

*You are My witnesses, declares the LORD,
And My servant whom I have chosen,
So that you may know and believe Me
And understand that I am He.
Isaiah 43:10 (NASB)*

Now listen to the following words and then verse 11, “Before Me there was no God formed and there will be none after Me, I, even I am the Lord and there is no savior besides Me.” What did God just say? He says “There is no one before Me”, He says “There is no one after Me” He says, “I am it. I am God and I am it and I am the only one.” Look at verse 13,

Even from eternity I am He. Isaiah 43:13 (NASB)

He said, “As far back into eternity as you want to go, I am still God, I am still Him.” He said, “And there is none who can deliver out of My hand. I act and who can reverse it.” In verse 14, He said, “The Lord Your redeemer the Holy one of Israel.”

So just in case you were not sure who is talking, He told you who He is. Now look at chapter 44 of Isaiah. We are going to be in Isaiah for a little while. God is still speaking. This is a long discourse from God. Verse 6 says,

Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

*‘I am the first and I am the last,
And there is no God besides Me.*

Isaiah 44:6 (NASB)

God just said “I am the first and I am the last and there is nobody else just Me.” Just Me! There is only Me, I am it, who is like Me? Let him proclaim it and declare it.” Look at verse 8,

*Do not tremble and do not be afraid;
Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it?
And you are My witnesses.
Is there any God besides Me,
Or is there any other Rock?
I know of none.
Isaiah 44:8 (NASB)*

He in effect said, “You might think you found one, but I do not know of any one.” The point is that there is only one God, He and He alone.

In Isaiah 45:5-6, God says,

*I am the LORD, and there is no other;
Besides Me there is no God.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me;
That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun
That there is no one besides Me.
I am the LORD, and there is no other. Isaiah 45:5-6 (NASB)*

The message so far is that there is one God. There is nobody else. He was in eternity past. No one was formed before Him and no one will be formed after Him. He and He alone is God; period! That’s the message. Look at verses 18b-19. Begin with the last part of verse 18. It says,

And I am the Lord and there is no one else. I have not spoken in secret in some dark land. Isaiah 45:18b-19a (NASB)

In other words, the point is that what He is saying in this pas-

sage is, “I told you that I am God.” Clearly, He is telling us that He is God.

Now look at chapter 45:21-22, it says,

Declare and set forth your case;
Indeed, let them consult together.
Who has announced this from of old?
Who has long since declared it?
Is it not I, the LORD?
And there is no other God besides Me,
A righteous God and a Savior;
There is none except Me.
Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;
For I am God, and there is no other.
Isaiah 45:21-22 (NASB)

Look at Isaiah 46:9. It says,

Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
Isaiah 46:9 (NASB)

Now about this time you may be thinking, “Is not this getting a little repetitious?” Yes! That is the whole point. What I want you to see is that again and again and again, God is claiming that He is God and that He is God alone and that there is no other - period! That is the point.

Now look at Isaiah 48:12,

Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called;
I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.
Isaiah 48:12 (NASB)

Again, that is a repeat, but I want you to see that verse because I want you now to just move down four verses to verse 16. This is where we are going to stop. Watch what it says,

Come near to Me, listen to this:
From the first I have not spoken in secret,
From the time it took place, I was there.

And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit. Isaiah 48:16
(NASB)

Do you see the last part of the verse? Who has been talking the whole time? God! What does it say at the end of the verse? “Now the Lord God has sent Me.” Who is the Me? Who is the one who has been speaking all of this time? “Me” is the one who has been talking all through chapters 43, 45, 46, 47 and now chapter 48 of Isaiah. The “Me” is the one who has been speaking. “I and I alone am God and there is no other, none before me, none after me, I am the savior,” and then He says “And the Lord God has sent Me, and His spirit.” What an incredible statement!

Now there in this passage you have all three parts of the Trinity together. But we are still not told there is a Trinity. So how do we handle this? This is just an unbelievable passage here in Isaiah. But how are we to understand it?

The way we handle it is simply like the following. I had a lady one time tell me she had a really difficult time believing in the Trinity. She could see that the Father was God, she could see that Jesus was God. (By the way, we have not arrived there yet, but we will.) She could see that the Holy Spirit is God. But she said, “I can’t believe in the Trinity. It just looks like three Gods to me.” I said, “Well do you believe that the Bible teaches that God is one?” “Yes,” she said. Then I said, “What you have to do is believe the Bible.” It says that God is one and Isaiah has repeatedly been stating since chapter 43 that God is one. You also believe that the Father is God, that Jesus is God, that the Holy Spirit is God, and there is only one God, and you believe the Scripture is teaching you the truth, then what is the conclusion? They are all one and there is a Trinity.

That is the only possible conclusion. How did we get there? We got there by searching and seeking with all our heart. You have to dig and dig in your study of Scripture. Do you know what you’re going to find as you dig? Every time you come to a passage of Scripture and ask the question, “What does this tell me about God?” – you are going to find some incredible things about God. You might discover that God is merciful. Wait until you look at all of the kings in the northern kingdom of Israel and all of the kings in the southern kingdom of Judah and you will see how evil they were. God kept warning

them and warning them and yet God was patient for hundreds of years.

You could hear about God being merciful, but how about 300 years of mercy and patience? You might think you are patient, waiting for tomorrow for something to happen. God waited for three hundred years! We do not really understand patience. God is not like us. He gives us a new definition of mercy and patience. We have a simplistic view of God, and the more you dig and study Scripture, the more you will ask the question, “What does this tell me about God?” You will learn some incredible truths about who God is.

PROPHECIES REVEAL CHRIST IS GOD. Let’s go now to Micah 5:2. This may be a very familiar passage of Scripture to many. In Micah 5:2, we are told

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.
His goings forth are from long ago,
From the days of eternity.
Micah 5:2 (NASB)

This is a prophecy about Christ! Christ will be born according to this verse in Bethlehem. This verse is quoted in Matthew 2. When the Magi came to Jerusalem, they wanted to know where the King of the Jews was going to be born. The religious leaders searched the Scriptures to find out where Jesus was to be born. They came back and told the Magi He is going to be born in Bethlehem. In fact, Matthew quotes Micah 5:2. Notice what it says at the very end of the verse, “His goings forth are from long ago from the days of eternity.” It is about Jesus. You don’t find out about Jesus’ relationship with the Trinity until you read the New Testament. What does this tell you about Jesus? Before He was born on this earth, He was from long ago. What that tells us is that Jesus was from long ago. He was eternal before He was ever born in that manger.

Look at Malachi 3:1. It says,

Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. Malachi 3:1 (NASB)

Look at it closely. The verse says, “Behold I am going to send My messenger and he will clear the way before Me.” God is talking. Who is the messenger? John the Baptist was “a voice crying in the wilderness make ready the way of the Lord.” He made ready the way of Christ. John was the one who announced to the people, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Look again at what the Son of God said in Malachi. He said, “Behold, I am going to send My messenger” - John the Baptist – “and he will clear the way before” who? Jesus! Does it say Jesus? No. The speaker does not say Jesus. He says “before Me.” So who is Jesus? God, Jesus is divine. Jesus is God.

By the time we get to the end of Malachi, we have already received a perspective that there is a plural one. We are already prepared when we get to the New Testament to discover that Jesus is God. Malachi 3:1 really makes the point. Now you can go to Matthew 2:6 in the New Testament, and you will discover that is a reference to Micah. But turn now to John 5:18. What I want you to see is what the religious leaders thought about Christ, what their view of Jesus was.

On one occasion Deepak Chopra made the statement that “Jesus never ever claimed to be God.” That is an interesting statement because as we are going to see, Jesus did claim to be God. That means Deepak Chopra did not read the Bible very well. John 5:18 says this,

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.
John 5:18 (NASB)

That means that Jesus said He was God. That is really clear here and the religious leaders understood what He said. Look at verse 26. Jesus says, “For just as the Father has life in Himself even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.” John said that God the Father has life in Himself. We call this doctrine the aseity of God. God is self-existing. You and I are not self-existing. Some day we will die. You and I can’t keep ourselves going. God is self-existing; He sustains himself. So what we discover here is that the Father and the Son are both self-sustaining.

Look at John 6:38. Here Jesus says,

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will but the will of Him who sent Me.

Jesus said “I used to be in heaven, I used to be up there with the Father.” Look at John 10:30. This is a big one for some of the cults. Verse 30 says,

I and the Father are one. John 10:30 (NASB)

The cults often want to claim that Jesus and the Father are just one in unity. They just get along. They agree. They have the same goals, the same purposes. No! That is not what it means!

What Jesus is saying is that He and the Father are one. They are the same! Look at the next verse. The next verse says the Jews picked up stones to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father, for which of them are you stoning me?” Jesus made this statement and the Jews responded with, “We are going to stone you.” Then Jesus said, “For what reason?” The next verse is the key verse. The Jews answered, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy because You being a man make Yourself out to be God.” Did Jesus ever claim to be God? Yes, right there! The religious leaders understood that Jesus claimed to be God. Either that is a true statement or Jesus was crazy, running around claiming to be a God.

Look at John 20:28. The disciples believed He was God. This is about as black and white as you can get. Thomas was called doubting Thomas because he did not really believe that Jesus had come back from the grave. In John 20:28 we read,

Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God.” John 20:28 (NASB)

Do you understand Thomas believed Jesus was God?

Look at Titus 2:13. This verse is a little technical. If you look at the last part of the statement, it refers to “Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”. Some people say, “Well, you see, this is really God and Savior, so the word, Savior, describes Christ. So we have here God and a Savior, Jesus Christ.” But the Greek text and grammar does not allow you to do that.

This is what we call the Granville Sharp Rule in the Greek. If you implement the Granville Sharp Rule, that means that God and Savior are referring to the same person. The point is really simple. Jesus is God and Jesus is the Savior. He is both. This is not God and another Savior. This verse is telling us that God and Savior are both the same person in Jesus Christ.

Now if we go to Colossians 2:9 we learn that He is the *pleroma* or the fullness of the Deity, of the Godhead. So, that means Jesus is fully and totally God.

CONCLUSION. I want to conclude tonight with 1 John 4:1. This is a very important verse because it is a test. This is an important test that is often missed. In fact, if you talk to somebody who claims to be a Christian and they deny who Jesus is, this will tell you whether or not they are a Christian. It says,

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1 (NASB)

Verse 1 simply tells us that this is a test and we can determine who is false and who is true. Now, look at verse 2.

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. 1 John 4:2 (NASB)

What’s the test? That Jesus came in the flesh; that’s the test.

Now let me make a point. If all this verse is saying is that a human showed up in the flesh - is that a test? The answer is no! That is not a test. A human showing up in human flesh is not a test. Why? I am a human and I am in human flesh, right? So, what kind of test is that to say that a human was born a human? Everybody would qualify! But, if the test is that Almighty God showed up in human flesh, now that is a test!

The test is that God showed up in human flesh and His name is Jesus. The point is that we have God the Father, God the Son called Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. Check out Acts 5:3-4 if you want proof that the Holy Spirit is God.

So, the Scripture tells us that the Father is God and Jesus is God and the Spirit is God. Yet, Scripture states there is only one God. James says that the demons believe and tremble. They

believe that God is one. Scripture tells us there is one God. How do you put all this information together? The answer is that Scripture is true! Since God is referred to as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and God is one, the only explanation is that God is a plural one. God is a Trinity. That gives you a whole different perspective of Genesis 1:1. For those of you who have been Christians for a long time, you may say, “I already knew that.” But, maybe today, we have given you some verses to help you realize that Jesus truly is God and there truly is a Trinity.

The truth comes by believing Scripture - believing that Scripture teaches truth. Scripture teaches that there is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and God is one. That is the only answer that is consistent with Scripture. There is a Trinity. God is beyond our understanding. Psalm 50:21 says,

You thought that I was just like you. Psalm 50:21 (NASB)

He is not. He is not like us. I would hope that you would expect God to be beyond our understanding. Let's pray.

