

# **DEFENDING THE FAITH**

## **Lesson 3**

### **Trinity**

“Trinity,” a word not found in Scripture, but used to express the doctrine of the unity of God as subsisting in three distinct Persons...The propositions involved in the doctrine are these:

1. That God is One, and that there is but one God.
2. That the Father is a distinct divine Person – distinct from the Son and the Holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus was truly God, and yet was a Person distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit.
4. That the Holy Spirit is also a distinct divine Person.

(Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

The Orthodox view of the Bible accepts the doctrine of the Trinity as a concept which Christians should not deny. They believe this doctrine is an acid test of true Christianity.

Many religious groups claim the Trinity doctrine was adopted from pagan beliefs, that it was not accepted by the Church Fathers. These groups, called cults by some, differ from one another about the origin of Jesus. Most of them believe their leader, or leaders, are the one who have “truth” and leaving such a group would cost one of his eternal life.

Why did the word “Trinity” come into being? The Catholic Encyclopedia (1966, Vol. 14) explains that the early Fathers had no reason to debate against the concept of the Trinity for it was a common belief among Christians. In the second century, some began speaking out against this teaching. The word “Trinity” was used to explain the nature of God. Later, Arius became a noted person, with many followers, who spread his “newly found wisdom.”

Of Arius it was said, “...they put themselves above the ancients, and the teachers of our youth, and the prelates of the day; considering themselves alone to be wise, and to have discovered truths, which had never been revealed to man before them.” Arius claimed that Christ is not God, but merely a creature, a man deified or adopted as divine. He argued day after day at length that “the Son is a creature, fashioned and made; He is not of the substance of the Father.” After much controversy, and meeting was called, the church elders met and debated, resulting in the adoption of the “Apostle’s Creed” (Nicene Creed, 325 A.D.) Arius was excommunicated as a heretic and the Church adopted the creed to establish once and for all the Church position in this belief.

The non-Trinitarian will ask, “If Jesus is the Son of God, how can He be God? There is only one God, and only one Son – therefore Jesus must have been created in his prehuman state.” They attempt to prove it by pointing to Scriptures, such as Col 1:15 which uses the word “firstborn,” claiming this word means, “created.” There is no one Scripture which says Jesus was “created.” The Greek word for “firstborn” is

prootokokas, meaning “Christ priority to all creation and His sovereignty over all creation.” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon).

They will also quote Rev. 3:14, saying the word “beginning” means Jesus was created. The Greek word “arche” means architect, meaning the origin, source, chief, ruler. Jesus is the origin of all creation. It doesn’t mean Christ had a beginning himself. He is the designer of creation. God is also called “the beginning” (Rev. 21:6)

The “firstborn” son in Hebrew culture was customarily the heir, the one with the right to rule (the preeminent one) even when the one who was heir was not the firstborn.

Gen. 41:51,52 says that Manesseh was a first born, and the second son was Ephraim. Jer 31:9 calls Ephraim the “firstborn” meaning he was ruler, so “firstborn” can mean ruler instead of first birth.

Creeds were statements of doctrine written against heresy. The following is from a book of creeds. This creed was written around 700 A.D. Many churches recite the Apostles’ Creed today.

### **THE APOSTLES’ CREED (as it appeared in the book)**

#### **I BELIEVE**

In (one) God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

- (1) And in Jesus Christ, *His only Son* (God’s Son), our LORD,
- (2) *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost*, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY
- (3) Suffered UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, was CRUCIFIED, dead AND BURIED; He descended into hell;
- (4) The THIRD DAY He *rose again* (RISEN) from the dead;
- (5) He ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN;
- (6) And *sitteth* (SEATED) ON THE RIGHT HAND OF *God* the Father *Almighty*;
- (7) From THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

#### **I believe**

- (1) (AND) IN THE HOLY GHOST,
- (2) THE HOLY Catholic Church, the communion of Saints
- (3) THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
- (4) THE RESURRECTION OF THE (FLESH) body, and the life everlasting.

Amen

**1. Concept of the Trinity:**

Gen 1:1,2 God (Elohim, Hebrew) created; Spirit hovering  
Gen 1:26 Let "us" make

**2. Only One God:**

Isa 43:10-12 No other god formed

**3. God the Father, God the Son**

Isa 40:3 Make highway for God  
Matt 3:3 Make highway for Jesus  
Ps 24:7,8 LORD almighty is King of glory  
1 Cor 2:8 Jesus is King of glory

**4. God the Son:**

Col 2:9 Dwells the fullness of Godhead, bodily  
NIV footnote: "fullness" meant the totality of God with all his powers and attributes." The Lord Jesus did not surrender His deity when He entered Mary's womb. There was a change in position but no surrender of His essential being. God cannot possibly cease to be God. He only gave up visible manifestation of the glory that had been His from eternity as God.

Jo 8:58 Jesus, the "I AM"

Jesus did not say, "I was" but "I AM," expressing the eternity of his being and his oneness with the Father.

Exo 3:14 I AM who I AM

NIV Footnote: The name that expressed his character as the dependable and faithful God who desires the full trust of his people.

**5. The First and the Last:**

Isa 44:6 God is  
Rev 1:8 God is  
Rev 1:17 Jesus is