GOD'S TRIUNE NATURE

(The Tri-Unity of God

Introduction:

God being an infinite being is above and beyond man's finite ability to fully comprehend (SEE: p. 46-48).

If His intelligence (Ps. 147:5; Is. 40:28; Rom. 11:34), works (Job 5:9, 9:10), greatness (Ps. 145:3), and judgments and ways (Rom. 11:33-34) cannot be completely understood by mortal man, then certainly His nature or essence cannot be known exhaustively.

Since God's *"greatness is unsearchable"* (Ps. 145:3), our ability to specifically know about Him is dependent upon written revelation. God has not yet revealed everything there is to know about Himself. But one day we will see Him as He is (I Cor. 13:12; I Jn. 3:2). Until then, we must accept by faith the data God has disclosed (Deut. 29:29). Since God's thoughts and ways are infinitely above man's (Is. 55:8-9), the Biblicist will submit His concept of God to that revealed in the sacred pages of Holy Scripture. Regarding truths that are too vast and mysterious for us to logically comprehend, we must accept what the Bible says and go no further. This faith is the essence of Biblical Christianity (Habakkuk 2:4; Heb. 11).

A. Definition of the "Trinity"

The word Trinity refers to the "tri-unity" of God. God is "three in one." God is three distinct and eternal persons, yet indivisibly one in nature and essence.

Analogies which may help illustrate the Trinity:

1. The Atom

An atom has		1)	a proton
		2)	a neutron
	and	3)	an electron
			Yet it is one atom.

2. A Musical Chord

Three distinct notes may be played on the piano at once, yet they make one sound. The word Trinity never occurs in the Bible (neither does the term "rapture" or the phrase "second coming" - yet these also are doctrines which the Scriptures clearly teach).

The word Trinity is simply a descriptive title which depicts a concept which is clearly taught in Scripture.

The doctrine of the Trinity recognizes that the Bible teaches:

1. Monotheism - There is only one God
2. Tri-Unity - God exists in three persons
3. Unicity - The three persons of the Godhead are eternally united in one essence

Three Heretical Errors to avoid:

1. Tri-theism - "There are three distinct Gods"
2. Modalism - "There is only one Person in the Godhead who has manifested Himself in three distinct ways (God revealed Himself as the Son, then as the Holy Spirit, but these persons are not distinct).
   (This view was popularized by Sabellius in 250 A.D.)
3. Arianism (Gnosticism) - "The Father alone is Jehovah God, who created the Son and the Spirit." This view was popularized by Arius in 300 A.D.

Those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity include Jews, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not exhaustively and fully taught in any one verse of Scripture, but is a doctrine that is clearly understood by an honest evaluation of all texts which speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and their relationships to each other.

B. The Old Testament makes many intimations of the Triune Nature of God

1. The name "Elohim" in the Old Testament
   "In the beginning God (Elohim) created the Heavens and the Earth" (Gen. 1:1).
   (The word "Elohim" which occurs some 2,570 times in the Old Testament is a plural name for the one and true God)

2. God uses plural pronouns in speaking of Himself throughout the Old Testament
   a. *"Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness"* (Gen. 1:26).
   b. *"Behold the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil"* (Gen. 3:22)
   c. *"Let us go down. . ."* (Gen. 11:7)
   d. *"Whom shall I send and who will go for us"* (Is. 6:8)

3. The Pre-incarnate Son of God - Jesus Christ - made these statements in the Old Testament
   a. Isaiah 48:16 - *"Come near unto me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the **Lord GOD**, and his **Spirit** hath sent **Me.**"*
   b. *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me (Jesus Christ). . ."* (Is. 61:1; cp. Lk. 4:18-19)

4. Jehovah God is distinguished from Himself in the Old Testament (The Father and the Son)
   a. Gen. 19:24 - *"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."*
   b. Isaiah 44:6 - *"Thus saith the LORD the king of Israel, and His redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God."*
   Compare Psalm 45:6-7 with Hebrews 1:8.

C. The New Testament makes many Intimations of the Triune Nature of God

1. The Baptismal formula indicates Triunity
   "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name (singular) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19).
   If Jesus were not deity, it would have been "the worst form of blasphemy for the Lord Jesus to use His own name and that of the Holy Spirit along with that of the Father if they were not co-equal with Him." (Richard DeHaan).

2. The Believers' Access to God indicates Triunity
   "For through Him (jesus) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephes. 2:18)
   "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." (Gal. 4:6)

3. Paul's benediction indicates Triunity
   "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." (II Cor. 13:14)

D. The Bible explicitly teaches the Triune Nature of God

1. The Bible clearly teaches that only one God exists (this doctrine is called "Monotheism").
   God is one divine essence.
   a. *"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord"* (Deut. 6:4) (cp. Deut. 4:35, 39)
   b. *". . . beside me there is no God"* (Is. 44:6)
   c. *". . . Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any"* (Is. 44:8)
   d. *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me. . ."* (Is. 45:5)
   e. *". . . There is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else"* (Is. 45:6).
   f. SEE: Isaiah 43:11, 45:21-22

2. The Bible clearly teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "God."
   a. The Father is called God (John 16:27)
   b. The Son is called God (Jn. 1:1; I Jn. 5:20; Rev. 21:7; Jn. 20:28; Heb. 1:8; Acts 20:28; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:15; Col. 2:9; I Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:13; Mt. 1:23; Is. 9:6).
   c. The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4; cp. Is. 6:9 with Acts 28:25; cp. Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).

3. The Bible clearly teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are eternal
   a. The Father is eternal (Ps. 90:2)
   b. The Son is eternal (Is. 9:6; Col. 1:17)
   c. The Spirit is eternal (Heb. 9:14)

4. The Bible clearly teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share the same attributes

	THE FATHER	THE SON	HOLY SPIRIT
OMNIPOTENCE	Rev. 19:6; Gen. 18:14, 17:1; Mt. 19:26; Jer. 10:12, 32:17; Rom. 1:20; Job 42:1-2	Mk. 2:10; Mt. 28:18; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 14:13-14; Is. 9:6	Rom. 15:13, 15:9 Lk. 1:35 Micah 3:8
OMNISCIENCE	Job 42:2; Ps. 147:5, 139:15; Is. 40:28; Dan. 2:20-22; I Ki. 8:39	Jn. 2:24, 16:30; Jn. 21:17; Col. 2:3; Mt. 9:4, 17:27; Jn. 11:14; Rev. 2:23	Is. 40:13-14; Jn. 14:26; 16:12-13; I Cor. 2:10
OMNIPRESENCE	Ps. 139:7-11, 15, 16; I Ki. 8:27; Acts 7:49; II Chron. 2:5-6; Jer. 23:24	Jn. 1:47-50; Mt. 18:20; Mt. 28:18-20	Psalm 139:7-10
ETERNALITY	Gen. 21:33; Rom. 1:20; Deut. 33:27; Rom. 16:26	Heb. 13:8; Jn. 8:58; 17:5; Col. 1:17; Rev. 21:6; Is. 9:6	Heb. 9:14; Gen. 1:2

5. The Bible clearly teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all involved in the same works.
   a. Creation
      1) The Father created (Gen. 1:1)
      2) The Son created (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2)
      3) The Spirit created (Job 33:4)
   b. Salvation
      1) The Father planned it (Eph. 1:4-6; Gal. 4:4)
      2) The Son provided it (Eph. 1:7-12; Gal. 4:5)
      3) The Spirit preserves it (Eph. 1:13-14; Gal. 4:6)
   c. Answered Prayer
      We are to pray:
      1) To the Father (mt. 6:9)
      2) Through the Son (I Tim. 2:5; Jn. 14:14)
      3) In the Spirit (Jude 20; Eph. 6:18)

6. The Bible clearly teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct from each other.
   a. The Father is distinct from the Son (Jn. 5:36-37; Gal. 4:4; Jn. 17:1)
   b. The Father and Son are distinct from the Spirit (JN. 14:16, 17; 15:26)
   c. Examples of the distinctiveness:
      1) At the Lord's baptism, the Son came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father spoke audibly from Heaven (Mt. 3:16-17)
      2) Both Jesus and the Father sent the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16, 16:7)

7. The Bible clearly teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in nature and essence.
   a. The Father and Son are one.
      1) *"I and my Father are one"* (Jn. 10:30)
      2) *". . . equal with God"* (Jn. 5:18)
      3) *"All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father"* (Jn. 5:23)
      4) *". . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"* (Jn. 14:9)
      5) *"I am in the Father, and the Father in me"* Jn. 14:10, 11)
      6) *". . . we are one. . ."* (Jn. 17:22)
      7) *"Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God"* (Phil. 2:6)
   b. The Father and Spirit are one.
      1) *"Ye are the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you"* (I Cor. 3:16; cp. I Cor. 6:19).
      2) *"The Lord is that Spirit"* (II Cor. 3:17)
      3) Believers are *"an habitation (dwelling place) of God through the Spirit"* (Eph. 2:22)
      4) The Holy Spirit's names show His oneness with the Father:
         a) *"The Spirit of your Father"* (Mt. 10:20; Acts 1:4)
         b) *"The Spirit of the Lord"* (Lk. 4:18)
         c) *"The Spirit of God"* (Mt. 3:16; I Cor. 6:11; I Pet. 4:14)
   c. The Son and Spirit are one.
      1) *"But ye are no in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."* (Rom. 8:9)
      2) *"I will send you another comforter"* [lit. another of the same kind] (Jn. 14:16)
      3) The Holy Spirit's names show His oneness with the Son:
         a) *"The Spirit of Christ"* (Rom. 8:9)
         b) *"The Spirit of Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 1:9; Acts 16:7)
         c) *"The Spirit of His (God's) Son"* (Gal.4:6)
      d. The Father, Son, and Spirit are one
         SEE: John 14:16, 18, 23

E. The Doctrine of the Trinity is the Basis of All Christian Doctrine
1. If there is no plurality in the Godhead, Christ cannot be God.
2. If Christ is not God, He could not die for the sins of the world and reconcile man to God (His sacrifice would not be infinite).
3. If Christ is not God, He cannot be the Savior of the world (Is. 43:11; Acts 4:12).
4. Anyone who rejects the doctrine that Jesus is God has *"another Jesus"* (II Cor. 11:4), is following *"another Spirit"* (II Cor. 1:4), is believing *"another Gospel"* (Gal. 1:8), and will die in their sins (John 8:24).