Trinity

The Trinity (Ancient Greek: Τριάς trias, Latin: Trinitas trinitas) is a doctrine that holds significant biblical and theological significance in Christianity. It states that God is one in essence but exists in three persons (Ancient Greek: ὑπόστασις hypostasis). Regarding the Trinity, the Eastern Church supported the mystery of one God in essence becoming three persons, while the Western Church supported the mystery of one God in essence becoming one God in three persons, showing a difference in theological perspective.

Old Testament

The Old Testament has been interpreted as referring to the Trinity in numerous passages. Biblical support for the Trinity already appears frequently in the Old Testament, and the New Testament bears witness to the phrases Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in numerous places.

Church Fathers such as Gregory of Nazianzus argued that revelation was gradual, stating that "the Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly and the Son more obscurely," for "when the divinity of the Father had not yet been acknowledged, it was not safe to proclaim the Son explicitly."

Genesis 18 and 19 are sometimes interpreted as texts that represent the Trinity, and according to Augustine, the three people in chapter 18 were the Trinity God in human form.

Plural Form

In the Old Testament, the plural Hebrew word Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) is used to refer to God. Furthermore, the following passages use the plural personal pronoun "we." Both the former and the latter are Hebrew words that clearly refer to two or more entities, indicating God's plural aspect.

There are passages in the Old Testament where God is referred to in the plural.

Messianic Prophecies

Below are prophecies about the Messiah from Isaiah 9 and Daniel 7:

For unto us is born a child, a Son given unto us; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

—Isaiah 9:6

I saw another vision during the night: One in human form came from heaven with a cloud and was brought before the Ancient of Days. Dominion, glory, and a kingdom were given to him, and all peoples of every race and language served him. His dominion will never pass away, and his kingdom will never be destroyed. — Daniel 7:13-14

The following texts are seen as representing the Trinity:

Come near here and listen to me. From the beginning I have not been secret, not whispering. I was there when all this came to pass. "And now the Sovereign Lord Yahweh has sent me with his Spirit.

—Isaiah 48:16

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those in prison. — Isaiah 61:1

In the New Testament,

John, in 1 John, states that "believing that God sent his Son, Jesus Christ," is keeping the commandments and loving God. He also suggests that the Holy Spirit is the one who testifies to this, and clearly states that the three are one, thereby supporting the doctrine of the Trinity.

Among Christian scriptures, the Gospel of John also addresses the concept of the Trinity by explaining the pre-existence of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

History

The early origins of Trinity doctrine in the Christian church stemmed from the expansion of Christology. The Seventy Years' War, which decimated other sects, left only Pharisaic Judaism, Ebionism, which emphasized humanity, and Gnosticism, which emphasized only the spiritual element of divinity. This was a shock that shook the very foundations of Christianity. A theological theory was needed to logically explain the identity of Christ, the second God

incarnate. Around this time, based on the New Testament, Christology emerged, along with the Trinity, an explanation of its rationale. The Trinity gradually evolved, becoming a central doctrine in Christianity, serving as a worldview and theological guideline for explaining the world.

In terms of ideological concepts, the early Christian environment—Judaism, polytheism, and Gnosticism—demanded a new explanation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God sent from heaven, who existed on earth, and who remained with Him after His crucifixion and resurrection—a Lord confessed by Christianity. In particular, the Gnostic emanation theory and Marcionist dualism were events that shook Christology, necessitating a theological concept to address these issues. This new concept was often further developed and logically systematized at the Councils of Nicaea in 325 and Constantinople in 381, establishing the Trinity as the concept of homoousius, the consubstantial nature of Jesus and the Father. Arius, who denied the Trinity by challenging the concept of homoousius, the "consubstantial and one substance of the Son and the Father," which had been accepted among the Church Fathers even before the Council of Nicaea, was excommunicated by the First Council of Nicaea.

Before the Council's decision, there is a document from the first-century Apostolic Father Clement of Rome, who affirms the Trinity—"the living soul of God, the living soul of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit"—and accepts the pre-existence of Jesus Christ before the Incarnation. Ignatius of Antioch, another Apostolic Father, also used pre-existing baptismal texts and the Gospel of John to refer to the concept of the Trinity. As the second century dawned, Christian apologists sought to establish a theological framework for explaining the relationship between the Father and the Son. Utilizing the concept of Logos, this concept developed from Justinian to Tatian and Theophilus of Antioch. The emergence of the economic Trinity theory of the 2nd century theologian Irenaeus and the Apostolic Tradition, which recorded the early Christian tradition, already contain a prayer for an ordained bishop based on the concept of the Trinity. After that, the decisions of the 4th century council were made based on the Trinitarian theories of the 3rd century theologians Hippolytus and Tertullian.

The concept of the Trinity is believed to have been conceived around the 4th century, but some religious scholars deny that the Trinity is based on Christian concepts. Others argue that it originated from early Christian understandings of the nature of God, or that it was borrowed from Plato's concept of the Holy Trinity before the spread of Christianity. Other scholars
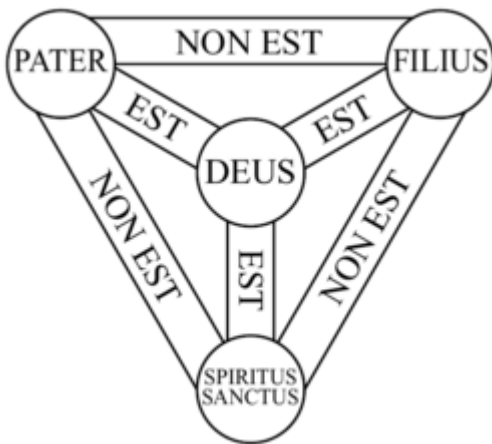
argue that the Christian concept of the Trinity is a doctrine influenced by ancient religions, including ancient Egypt and Hinduism.

Today, most Christian denominations understand the Trinity as a central doctrine. As explained in John 14, Jesus Christ demonstrated through his public ministry that he is God himself, that he is the only begotten Son of the Father and stands in an eternal relationship with the Father, and that the Holy Spirit, as God, performs God's work. They assert that God is not an "absolute single entity" but rather that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, and that through this, Jesus was the very embodiment of the Trinity. However, the Trinity is not a central doctrine of all Christian denominations. Some restorationist denominations, rejecting the Nicene Creed and the ecumenical conciliar tradition of the universal church, even deny the doctrine of the Trinity, arguing that it is unbiblical. They claim that the doctrine was established oppressively at the Council of Nicaea.

Theology

Shield of the Trinity (Scutum Fidei). The Father (Pater), the Son (Filius), and the Holy Spirit (Spiritus Sanctus) are not the same persons (non est), but are one God (God).

In Christianity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit exist as three persons (three persons, three entities, three parts), but the doctrine is that the essence is one God. The expression "Trinity" appears indirectly in various ways in the Tanakh, which the church calls the Old Testament, and the Trinity is clearly presented in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 13:13, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." The term "Trinity" was used by later churches. Furthermore, most Christians, regardless of their sect, defend the concept of the Trinity, arguing that it is indirectly implied in the Gospel of John and

elsewhere (the frequent expression "Father and Son are one"). The term "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible. It originated around 200 AD when the Latin theologian Tertullian coined the term "trinitas" to describe God. Christian hymns often depict the Trinity in three lines, with one line each for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament contains a "foreshadowing" of the Trinity. The "three men" who visited the patriarch Abraham are also referred to as "Lords," which some Christians interpret as a visit by the Trinity to Abraham, long before the Son was born in the secular form of Jesus. Eastern Orthodox artists have repeatedly depicted Abraham and this "Old Testament Trinity" in their paintings.

- • Please note that the English expression "persons" is a limitation of the translation of "human person" or "God's person." However, it is not appropriate to misapply this and use the term "person" to explain the Trinity. This is because human person and God's person must be distinguished, and Jesus Christ has two natures in one person: divine and human. Also, we must remember that the word "Trinity" means three persons.

father

The Cappadocian Fathers established the formula that God is "one essence" in "three persons."

The Greek Fathers, while asserting the unity of the Father (Μοναρχία), attributed the origin of the personal existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit not to their common essence but to the Father's hypostasis. Representatively, Gregory of Nazianzus stated, "Each is God because of their consubstantiality, and each is one God because of the Father's unity of origin."

According to Gregory of Nazianzus, the word about God is the word about the Trinity, encompassing "from light (the Father), light (the Son), and in light (the Holy Spirit)"—that is, "the doctrine of God in a concise and simple way."

Various Interpretations

- **Tritheism:** The theory of "three Gods in three persons."

- **Modalism:** The theory of "one God in one person," manifesting in three forms over time: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Simply put, an example of

modalism is the assertion that God acts as the Father during the Old Testament, as the Son during the New Testament, and as the Holy Spirit after the New Testament.

- Subordinationism: The theory that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one and the same entity, but that the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate to the Father.

- Adoptionism: Adoptionism asserts that Jesus became the Son of God because God adopted him as His son..

Christian Traditions

• Most churches that observe the church calendar celebrate Holy Trinity Sunday, commemorating the Trinity.

• The Sign of the Cross and the Sign of the Cross, customary in the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, and some Protestant denominations (Lutheran, Anglican), symbolize the Trinity.

Creeds Including the Trinity

- Athanasian Creed

- Apostles' Creed

- Nicene Creed

- Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

- The 39 Articles of the Church of England

- Chalcedonian Creed

Views by Denomination

Pro-Trinitarian Denominations and Churches

Most pro-Trinitarian denominations and churches inherit the theological tradition of Christianity, recognize only the Old and New Testaments as scripture, and accept the theological standards of the universal church era as apostolic guidance. These denominations include the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, and Protestant denominations such as the

Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church, the Anglican Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Holiness Church, and the Pentecostal Church.

The elements of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—come from Matthew 11:27 and Mark 10:22, where Jesus says he received everything from the Father.

"All things have been entrusted to me by the Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

—Matthew 11:27 (NIV)

Furthermore, chapter 28, verse 19, teaches us to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and chapter 14 of the Gospel of John further elaborates on this. First Corinthians 8:6 uses parallelism to suggest that Jesus Christ is identical with the Creator.

For to us there is one God, the Father, who created all things, and we exist for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist, and through him we live. — 1 Corinthians 8:6 (NIV)

Opposing Views

Most anti-Trinitarian denominations emerged after the 19th century. They regard the theological tradition of mainstream Christianity as apostasy. They argue that the current church was ruptured by apostasy from the early church through the universal church, and that the Trinity, too, represents a theory of rupture, and that rejecting it is the way to bridge the rupture. Restorationist groups that reject the Nicene Creed and the ecumenical doctrines of the universal church include Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-day Saints, and Unitarians.

When we examine various aspects of the Bible, such as Deuteronomy 6:4 in the Old Testament, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one, the Lord is one," and Matthew 4:10 in the New Testament, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'", we find that it also contains content that seems unrelated to the Trinity. Non-Trinitarian denominations such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, and

Christ-Adelphians also point out this point, arguing that if Jesus Christ were part of the Trinity, they could have said "to us" instead of "to him only."