

# Tri-unity of God

## I. Definitions

A. Unity of God: There is but one God and that the divine nature is undivided and indivisible. Theissen

B. Tri-unity of God.

1. God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God. Grudem
2. There are three eternal distinctions in the one divine essence, known respectively as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Theissen
3. We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons, nor separating the substance. Athanasian Creed
4. There is one and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal, coequal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence. BB Warfield

## II. Descriptions

A. There are three statements that summarize the teaching of the tri-unity. Grudem

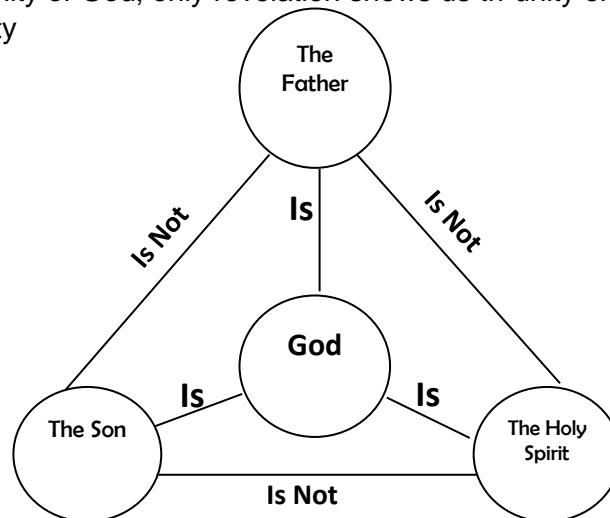
1. God is three persons.
2. Each person is God.
3. There is one God.

B. There are no differences in deity, attributes, or essential nature between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Grudem

C. God is not merely one, but He is the only One—only one infinite and perfect Being and He does not consist of parts nor can He be divided into parts. Thiessen

D. Reason shows us unity of God; only revelation shows us tri-unity of God. Strong

E. Illustration of Tri-unity



F. Generation and procession occur within the divine Being and carry with them no thought of subordination of essence:

1. The Father begets the Son and is He from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds.
2. The Son is begotten and is He from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds.
3. The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, But He neither begets nor is He the One from whom any proceed. Ryrie

G. Doctrine of tri-unity expressed in 6 statements: Strong

1. In Scripture there are three who are recognized as God.
2. These three are so described in Scripture that we are compelled to conceive of them as distinct persons.
3. This tripersonality of the divine nature is not merely economic and temporal, but is immanent and eternal.
4. This tripersonality is not tritheism; for while there are three persons, there is but one essence.
5. The three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal.

6. Inscrutable yet not self-contradictory, the doctrine furnishes the key to all other doctrines.

H. All analogies have shortcomings. God's tri-unity is a unique existence and there is nothing in the universe that can express or explain it.

### III. Designations: Names and Titles of God—Elohim: God is a plural noun used of God

### IV. Declarations of Scripture

#### A. Old Testament passages

1. Passages that suggest/imply God exists as more than one person (plural verbs and pronouns)

Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8; Isa. 44:6; 63:7-10

2. Passages where one person is called God or Lord distinguished from another person who is said to be God. Ps. 45:6,7; Ps. 110:1; Isa. 48:16; Isa. 63:10; Isa. 61:1; Hos. 1:7; Mal. 3:1,2

3. Passages the Angel of the Lord and also called God or Lord. Gen. 16:13; 18:1-21; 19:1-28; Ex. 3:2-6; 23:20-22; Num 22:35,38; Judges 2:1-2; 6:11; Mal. 3:1

4. Personification of wisdom Prov. 8:22-31 (some say speaking of the Son of God)

5. Jehovah/Yahweh has a Son Ps. 2:7

6. Descriptions of Messiah

#### B. New Testament passages giving a more complete revelation of the tri-unity of God

1. Jesus baptism Matt. 3:16,17; Mk. 1:9-11; Lu. 3:21,22; Jn. 1:32-34

2. Baptismal statement Matt. 28:19

3. Jesus concerning the Comforter Jn. 14:16,17

4. Ministry of the church I Cor. 12:4-6

5. Apostolic benediction II Cor. 13:14

6. Ministry of the Godhead to believers Eph. 1:3-14; 2:18; 4:4-6

7. Greeting of an Epistle I Pet. 1:2

#### C. God is three Persons (above)

#### D. Each Person is God

1. The Father is God Gen. 1:1; Jn. 6:27; I Pet. 1:2

2. The Son is God. Jn. 1:1; Jn. 20:28, 30,31; Heb. 1:3,8; Titus 2:13; II Pet. 1:1; Isa. 9:6; 40:3; Matt. 9:4

3. The Holy Spirit is God Acts 5:3,4; trinitarian expressions cf. B

#### E. There is one God. Deut. 6:4,5; James 2:19; I Tim. 2:5; Rom. 3:30; Mk. 12:28,29; Isa. 45:5,6

### V. Detractors of the tri-unity of God.

A. Modalism—one God Who appears to us in three forms or modes

B. Arianism—Denies full Deity of the Son and Holy Spirit

C. Subordinationism—Son is eternal and divine, but still not equal to the Father in being or attributes

D. Adoptionism—Jesus was an ordinary man until His baptism, but God adopted Jesus as his "Son" and conferred on Him supernatural powers

E. Tritheism—Denies there is only one God

### VI. Delineations of Blessings/Benefits of tri-unity

A. Adoration of a wonderful God

B. Relationship with each member of the triune God

C. Roles and works of each member of the triune God

1. Father as Father, King, Lord

2. Son as Lord, Savior, High Priest, Advocate, Head of the body

3. Holy Spirit convicts of sin, quickens to spiritual life, Comforter, bears His fruit in our lives, enables us to live and serve