

Evidence For The Holy Spirit

Notes

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Theology of Trinity Developed Out of Experience, Not Philosophy

The only reason we know anything at all about the God of heaven and Earth is because this God revealed himself to human beings just like us.

- The Old Testament is a collection of stories of how this God revealed himself in human affairs - “the God who delivered us out of Egypt”
- A new experience of God: Jesus, who said, “I and the Father are one,” spoke with the authority of God, claimed God's power and prerogative to forgive sins, and judged as God judges. People began to realize that, when they looked on the face of Jesus, they saw none other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The more emphatic the early church became that Jesus Christ was, in fact, God incarnate—God in the flesh—the more pressure grew to clarify their relationship. There was a need to make sense of their own undeniable experience that Jesus of Nazareth was God in the flesh.

Early Heresy - Marcion, 140 A.D.- suggested that there were actually two gods—a creator god seen in the Old Testament that was completely different from the saving god described in the New Testament - but that ignored the repeatedly declared biblical premise that God is one: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4).

- Early Christians experienced God in a third way: Christians knew that God was not only out there, but also inside them - on the Day of Pentecost the Spirit of God flowed into them in a new and miraculous way

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Romans 8:9).

"The doctrine of the Trinity wasn't invented—it was uncovered. The doctrine of the Trinity...is not some arbitrary and outdated dictate handed down by some confused council—it is the inevitable result of wrestling with the richness and complexity of the Christian experience of God." (Oxford theologian, Alister McGrath)

1. Humans first experienced a God who created the world, and whose glory can be seen reflected in the wonder of nature.
2. They experienced a God who saved humans from ultimate darkness and death, whose tender love can be seen in the face of Jesus Christ.
3. And they experienced a God who is personally present and active in the lives of believers. These experiences finally led to the conclusion that God has revealed his one being in these three unique ways.

St. Augustine:

“If you can comprehend it, it is not God.”

“If you deny [the Trinity] you lose your soul, if you try to explain it you lose your mind.”

The Trinity is a good mystery—a mystery that preserves God's majesty and holiness against those who would carelessly carve God down into something the human mind can comprehend; not a mystery that leaves us dumb and terrified, but one that leaves us happy, singing, and giving thanks.

Father, Son, and Spirit are not three departments in a corporation, each with different duties—like sales, research, and marketing. Each part of God is involved in every action of God. For example, Creation:

- *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2).*
- *"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus)...through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3).*

God in Three Persons

This formula was derived in the 3rd century - Latin word *persona* referred to the face masks actors wore in Roman drama. By changing persona (or masks), one actor could perform several different roles in the same play.

By declaring that there is "one God in three persons," these ancient theologians were using an analogy common to their own culture to say that, while human beings experience each role in a different way, the same God is playing them all.

What does this doctrine of the Trinity mean to me?

Christian faith is not so much believing ideas about God as it is trust in the person of God. The crucial point is that we believe in a Trinitarian way; in other words, that we experience God in a three-fold manner.

Day of Pentecost & Following

"When the HS has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere..." (Acts 1:8)

- @ 120 followers grew to over 3000 in one day! over 20 million by 3rd Century
- Previously frightened and cowardly disciples became bold preachers of Jesus and his message
- They performed signs and wonders
- Transformed lives, answers to prayers, miracles performed in Jesus' name are all a result of the workings of the third person of the Trinity--the HS

An illustration from William Lane Craig: Suppose you are accused of a crime you didn't commit. But all the evidence points to you. There is DNA, there are witnesses, there is other physical evidence, all of it pointing to you as the guilty one. You know you are innocent, but because of all the mounting evidence do you say, "OK, I guess I did it?" Of course not. You continue to maintain your innocence because you know your experience and your experience is, you are innocent; you didn't do it!

"If we love each other," John said, "God lives in us, and his love has been brought to full expression through us. And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us." (1 John 4:12-13)