

Straight Talk #49 On The Trinity

By William J. Schnobelen, © 2011

Many Believers feel a bit intimidated about trying to discuss the concept of the Trinity when soul-winning. Of course, it is not normally a concept that comes up—unless you are witnessing to a cultist. Virtually all cultists (Mormons (LDS), Jehovah's Witnesses (JW), Way International, "Jesus Only" churches, etc.) deny the Trinity in some fashion or another.

The Trinity only becomes a difficult concept when you try to make the Creator fit into too small a "box." It is obviously hard for us, as finite beings, to conceive how YHWH can be three, yet one. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that cultists like the Mormons or JW's try to "muddy" the water by claiming that Christians believe things in the Trinity doctrine that we do **not** actually believe.

A brief study like this cannot plumb the depths of doctrine or history. (See note 1) However, we will try and give a brief survey of the doctrine and then discuss how to talk about it to those who deny it. The word Trinity is not, as the cults love to remind us, in the Bible. Nevertheless, just because a word is not used, doesn't mean that the doctrine that the word describes is not present. The best example of this (especially for a JW) is to show them that the word "theocracy" or "theocratic" is not found in the Bible, yet the concept of a nation ruled entirely by God is definitely present.

To get into the meat of it, the doctrine of the Trinity is that in all the universe, there is only one, true Creator, YHWH. However, that one Creator is made up of three distinct, separate Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This is derived from two consistent and central themes that run through the very warp and woof of both Testaments about YHWH. The **first theme** is that He is one (Deut.6:4, Isaiah **43:10**, etc.). The **second theme** is that Yah'shua (the Hebrew name of Jesus) the Messiah is fully, utterly and completely YHWH, yet somehow distinct from the Father.

This leaves us with two pieces of data which are apparently in contradiction and which we have to believe are both true:

- 1.) There is only one YHWH; and
- 2.) The Father is YHWH and Yah'shua is YHWH.
- 3.) A corollary to this is the fact that the Bible also tells us that the Holy Ghost is yet another Person Who is YHWH (**Acts 5:3-4, Acts 13:2-4, Acts 15:28, Acts 16:6, Acts 20:23**). These passages **all** present a Personal Being Who speaks and makes decisions and has emotions, and yet Who is also God!

Lest we just emphasize the New Testament; I want to take you to a couple of Tenakh (the "Old Testament") passages which also clearly teach the Trinity. In **Isaiah 48:12-16**, we find a rather lengthy passage which we quote in part. In any event, check out the complete passage:

*Hearken unto me, o Jacob and Israel my called; I am he; I am the first and I am also the last. [this is obviously the Almighty speaking—there can be no other "first and last"]... Come ye near unto me, hear ye 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.—Isaiah 48:12-16.***

Notice here, we have *all three members of the Trinity* in a few short verses, and from the supposedly "anti-Trinitarian" Tenakh of the Hebrews. Also, again note that both the YHWH God [the Father] *and* His Spirit have sent me [the Son]. We have the Spirit sending, doing something only a person can do.

Also, in **Gen.6:3**, we read: "*And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man...*" To strive is to fight or to contend, again something only a person can do. It implies consciousness and intent. There are other passages from the Hebrew Scriptures as well.

Is Yah'shua God?

This clearly shows at least two persons in the Godhead is **Proverbs 30:4**:

*Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered up the wind in his fist? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? [Obviously we are talking about the Almighty Creator here!] what is his name, and **what is his son's name**, if thou canst tell?*

Also in **Psalms 2:7,12**: "*I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day I have begotten thee....Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*" Evidently this is not David, but rather the Messiah, the only "begotten" Son of God. Certainly the Word of God would not teach that people are blessed for putting their trust in David.

Concerning Yah'shua, here is where much of the attack from cultists comes. Yet there are so many clear Bible verses that teach His deity. Here are some further samples:

1.) John 1:1-3,14 —*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...And **the Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

2.) John 8:58—Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

A brief comment is in order for #2. The person may need to have explained to them that the term “I am” as Yah’shua used it was a form of the Divine Name of God, YHWH—translated “I am who I am,” or “I am.” See **Ex. 3:14**: “*And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*”

The Pharisees understood His meaning full well. It is why they tried to STONE Him for blasphemy, for taking the unspeakable and holy name of YHWH upon Himself (see John 8:59).

3.) Acts 20:28—Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

This verse plainly teaches that YHWH bought the church *with His own blood*, and yet we know that Abba Father has no blood, since He is a Spirit (see **John 4:24, Luke 24:39**). Thus, this is Yah’shua—as El Shaddai, the Almighty—being discussed.

4.) Colossians 1:13-19—Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

See, if ALL fullness dwells in our Messiah, then He possesses the fullness of the Godhead, He is YHWH

Col. 2:2-3—That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Col. 2:8-9—Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

1 Tim.3:16— *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

1John 5:7—*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, **the Word**, and the Holy Ghost: **and these three are one.***

Isa. 9:6—*For unto us **a child is born**, unto us **a son** is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Matt. 28:19—*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the **name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

Point out to the person with who you are speaking that although there are three Persons named in the verse, there **is only one name (singular)**! This is a clear reflection of the Godhood of Yah'shua, and of the unity of the Trinity.

Here we have nearly a dozen clear verses that teach that Yah'shua is YHWH. **A word of warning is in order here.** In witnessing, especially to cultists—and most especially to Jehovah's Witnesses—you need to beware of modern Bible translations. (i.e., the NIV, NAS, RSV, NKJV, Living Bible, etc.) They all either censor, emasculate or totally REMOVE key verses like these on the Deity and blood of Yah'shua. Additionally, they are based on the same corrupt manuscripts as the Jehovah's Witnesses' "bible," the so-called New World Translation. Thus, absolutely **STICK TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE** and it will never let you down in a witnessing encounter (or in any other use). It is YHWH's perfect Word for today (**Psalm 12:6-7**)! (**See note 2**)

Teaching the Trinity Biblically

Romans 1:20 tells us "*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world **are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, eyen his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse:***" Thus, we see that the truths about the Creator should be able to be **clearly** seen—even to a cultist (See note 3)

Now, let's ask the person, what could be more clearly seen than the sun? It is the plainest thing imaginable. Going to the Bible, we find that Abba Father is spoken of thus:

Ps. 84:11—*For the **LORD** God is a sun and shield: the **L** am will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

We have Yah'shua, the Son mentioned in these passages:

Ps. 19:4-5—*Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a*

bridegroom [Yah'shua our Bridegroom] coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

Mal. 4:2—*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;*

God the Holy Spirit is also associated with the sun, though not quite as clearly:

Isa. 59:19—*So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*

We can see that the sun is a definite type of YHWH. Like the Lord, the sun is the source of all warmth, life and growth. Yah'shua is the source of all our spiritual warmth, life and growth. Now the sun, we know, is one and unique. Yet it has three kinds of rays:

- 1.) Rays which can be seen, but not felt—this is like the Son, visible, but unfelt
- 2.) Rays which can be felt, but not seen—this is like the Holy Spirit, felt but not seen
- 3.) Actinic rays which can neither be seen nor felt—this is like ABBA Father, Who can be neither seen nor felt. (**1Tim. 6:16** *"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."*)

There is one Sun with three rays, separate or un-separate according to operation—one Creator in three Persons (**Matt. 3:16**)—a perfect metaphor!

A second approach is to recall that human beings are made in the image of YHWH (**Gen. 1:27**). They all have a body, a soul, and a spirit—tri-partite beings (**1Ths. 5:23, Hebr. 4:12**). Each of those parts is distinct and separate, and yet each part is absolutely essential to you being “you.” You cannot have a complete human being if one of those three parts is missing; and yet that human being is one human being, **not** three. This is a tiny part of the divine imprint that we carry, and it is a beautiful type of the Trinity.

Carrying this up to the cosmic level again, we find that YHWH has a "body"—Yah'shua the Messiah. He has a "spirit"—the Holy Spirit. He has a "soul"—the Father (see **Lev. 26:11, Isa. 1:14, Isa. 42:1, Jer. 5:9**). Thus, the Trinity is reflected in another of YHWH's creation—humanity.

Teaching by Analogy

Another way to further explain the Trinity to the unsaved person is through analogy. Ultimately, we can only understand the Trinity by analogy, because it is a divine love relationship too far removed from our minds to be fully comprehended. The Bible does warn us that the Almighty's ways are far too profound to be fully understood by the

human mind.(**Isaiah 55:8-9**) If we could completely comprehend God, we would evidently BE God.

However, we can use the analogy to try and give examples from creation, and from our common experience; of what the Trinity is LIKE. Yah'shua used analogies extensively in His own teaching. The Bible calls them parables (cf. Mt.13, for instance). For an example of an analogy, Norman Geisler, a Bible scholar says that YHWH is **THREE** "Who's" in **ONE** "What." In other words, **WHO YHWH IS** is Father, Son and Spirit; but **WHAT GOD IS** is one Creator. YHWH is one Deity who Is Father, Son and Spirit.

The family is another analogy from creation. I am part of a family. I have a father and a mother. Each parent and myself are distinct persons, yet we are ONE family, and if you remove one or the other person, the family ceases to be family. Or look at a room. A room is composed of three dimensions, height, width, and depth; yet it is one room. Take away the room's height or width, and it ceases to be a room.

If our puny, human, finite minds can conceive of so many metaphors and analogies for the Trinity; if we grant YHWH the right to be so much bigger and more glorious than we can possibly comprehend or imagine, then we should have no problem handling the Trinity. Fair enough? Remember the testimony of John, *"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and **the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.**"* - **1** John 5:7. (Also, realize that this clear verse has been removed from most modern "bibles.")

Endnotes:

- 1.) We can recommend an excellent book by E. Calvin Beisner called **GOD IN THREE PERSONS**. It is a Living Studies book, published by Tyndale House (1986).
- 2.) *"Apologetics on the Authority of the Word of God against the Cults"* and the books (#21) **LET'S WEIGH THE EVIDENCE** by Barry Burton; and (#22) **THE ANSWER BOOK** by Dr. Samuel Gipp; all available from our ministry catalog. Write for a free copy of the catalog.
- 3.) We are deeply indebted to Dr. Peter S. Ruckman for his expository teaching on the sun as a metaphor for the Trinity. He is certainly one of the most insightful commentators on the Bible living today, and his materials can be had from the Bible Baptist Bookstore, P.O. Box 7135, Pensacola, FL 32514.