

A Biblical Study of The Trinity

The Creation Account And The Implied Trinity

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

(Gen 1:1-2) KJV

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” (Gen 1:26-27) KJV

The Genre of The Genesis Account of Creation

At the outset, let it be known that the writer understands that there are those who will refuse to accept the fact that the Trinity is seen in the above verses. They may contend that the account of creation as seen in Genesis chapters one and two is not a literal, historical narrative, but rather a poetic narrative that does not yield itself to a literal reading and interpretation. Is this truly so?

The form of the creation account is historic. It gives a chronological procession of events. We are told of how the creation took place from day to day. The days are literal twenty-four hour days, as we can see from Moses: *“In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Ex 20:11) KJV* This again points us to the Genesis account being a literal, historical record of the creation. Furthermore, Jesus taught the Genesis account of creation to be a literal, historical record (See Matt 12:8;19:3-6), the writer of Hebrews understood it to be the same (See Heb 4:4;11:3), the Psalmist understood the same (Ps 33:6-11;136:1-9), as did Solomon (Prov 3:19,20), and the list could surely be continued. Of those who choose to call the Genesis creation account a sort of poem a question must be asked: would not some of the prophets or apostles, or even (I might say especially) Jesus have learned that this was not literal history, but only a poetic statement of God's creating the world and informed us of this fact? A view that considers the Genesis account of creation to be anything other than literal history calls into question the knowledge, character, and integrity of Jesus, who taught it to be literally true. This writer is content to believe that this account was given to us that we might know the literal, historical truth about the creation of the world and the God who created it. (Note: Though this writer affords no more authority to the Early Church Fathers than he does to elders whom he is to respect today, it is interesting to note that Augustine believed the Genesis account of creation to be historical. *“What then is this introduction? 'In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth, and the earth was invisible, and unformed? and darkness was upon the face of the abyss.' Do these words seem to some of you incapable of affording consolation under distress? Is it not an historical narrative, and an instruction about the creation?”*

Schaff, P. (2000). *The Nicene Fathers* (electronic ed.). Garland, TX: Galaxie Software.)

The Name of God in The Creation Account

Biblical languages are rich. We can learn much from them. With the resources available today one can learn much without having learned the original languages (Though the writer recommends one attempting to gain at least a rudimentary understanding of the original languages of Scripture.). The Hebrew name for God in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim*. Let us learn to what *Elohim* points us.

“That there is such a plurality of persons, will appear more clearly,

From the plural names and epithets of God. His great and incommunicable name Jehovah, is always in the singular number, and is never used plurally; the reason of which is, because it is

expressive of his essence, which is but one; it is the same with “ I AM that I AM ”; but the first name of God we meet with in scripture, and that in the first verse of it, is plural; “In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth”, (Gen. 1:1) and therefore must design more than one, at least two, and yet not precisely two, or two only; then it would have been dual; but it is plural; and, as the Jews themselves say, cannot design fewer than three ¹⁵⁰ . Now Moses might have made use of other names of God, in his account of the creation; as his name Jehovah, by which he made himself known to him, and to the people of Israel; or Eloah, the singular of Elohim, which is used by him, (Deut. 32:15, 16) and in the book of Job frequently; so that it was not want of singular names of God, nor the barrenness of the Hebrew language, which obliged him to use a plural word; it was no doubt of choice, and with design; and which will be more evident when it is observed, that one end of the writings of Moses is to extirpate the polytheism of the heathens, and to prevent the people of Israel from going into it; and therefore it may seem strange, that he should begin his history with a plural name of God; he must have some design in it, which could not be to inculcate a plurality of gods, for that would be directly contrary to what he had in view in writing, and to what he asserts, (Deut. 6:4). “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord”: nor a plurality of mere names and characters, to which creative powers cannot be ascribed; but a plurality of persons, for so the words may be rendered, distributively, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language; “In the beginning everyone, or each of the divine persons, created the heaven and the earth”. And then the historian goes on to make mention of them; who, besides the Father, included in this name, are the Spirit of God, that moved upon the face of the waters, and the word of God, (Gen. 1:2) which said, “Let there be light, and there was light”; and which spoke that, and all things, out of nothing; see (John 1:1-3).”

John Gill. *A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY* (179). Formatted for use with Logos Bible Software by Joseph Kreifels.

In Genesis 1:1, the original word *Elohim*, "God," is certainly the plural form of *El*, or *Eloah*, and has long been supposed, by the most eminently learned and pious men, to imply a plurality of persons in the divine nature. As this plurality appears in so many parts of the sacred writings to be confined to three persons, hence the doctrine of the TRINITY, which has formed a part of the creed of all those who have been deemed sound in the faith, from the earliest ages of Christianity. Nor are the Christians singular in receiving this doctrine, and in deriving it from the first words of divine revelation. An eminent Jewish rabbin, Simeon ben Joachi, has these remarkable words: "Come and see the mystery of the word *Elohim*; there are three degrees, and each degree by itself alone, and yet, notwithstanding, they are all one, and joined together in one, and are not divided from each other." In the ever blessed Trinity, from the infinite and indivisible unity of the persons, there can be but one will, one purpose, and one infinite and uncontrollable energy.

Clarke, A. (1999). *Christian Theology* (electronic ed.). Albany, OR: Ages Software.

Jesus Our Divine Creator

As we consider the Trinity as implied and seen in the Creation we must recognize that the leading person in the Creation was God the Father. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”* (Heb 1:1-4) KJV God the Father took the lead in the Creation, but when He created, He did so by the Son. Notice how the Psalmist alludes to this: *“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”* (Ps 33:6) KJV Today we

understand that the Psalmist was not only saying that creation was by Divine fiat, but that he was alluding to the Father creating the worlds by Christ. “We may truly and certainly infer from this passage, that the world was framed by God’s Eternal Word, his only begotten Son.” Calvin, J. (2000). *Calvin’s Commentaries* (electronic ed.). electronic ed. (Ps 33:6). Garland, TX: Galaxie Software.

The New Testament gives us ample testimony to the fact of the deity of Christ, using the creative work of God to do so. John opens his account of Christ by saying, “*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. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*” (*Jn 1:1-4*) KJV Even if we were to grant the contention of the Russellites (which we do not) that the translation should be “the Word was a god,” we must still come to the conclusion that the Word in this passage is more than one god among many. Why? We must come to this conclusion because the Word is the very self-expression of God; the very mind, heart, and character of God; the eternal and perfect understanding that the Father has of Himself. When God is considered as contemplating His eternal greatness and having a perfect thought of Himself, that thought is spoken of as the Word (logos), because it would be both a perfect representation of His thought and (words being expressions of thoughts) would be an eternal person equal to the Father and of the same essence. We know that Jesus is the Word of God who is the expression of the nature, heart, character and will of God in eternity and in this world. Thus it is that the Son is spoken of as being eternally begotten of the Father. Never has there been a time that the Father has not had this perfect awareness of His eternal self, and so there has never been a time that the Son/Word was not.

The Word is spoken of as being with God in the beginning. That is, the Word was before the creation. This means that the Word is eternal in nature. Immortality is the unique attribute of God (1Tim 6:16). He alone has immortality. If the Word was with God before the creation of the worlds, then He is necessarily immortal, and thus necessarily God. Not only so, but referring back to the great I AM of Exodus (See Ex 3:13-15), John tells us that not only is the Word the immortal God and Creator, but that He is this I AM; the one who has underived existence. In Him- the Word- was life. The Word, God, the Creator is the source of all life. In other words, the Word is YWH. Then we read, “*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.*” (*Jn 1:14*) KJV This confirms to us that the writer is indeed telling us of Jesus, and that Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

The deity of Christ in relation to the creation is confirmed to us as we read the New Testament. Paul wrote to the Colossians and told them of Jesus: “*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.*” (*Col 1:15-17*) KJV We again read, “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” (*Heb 1:1-3*) KJV These two passages present to us the Son as being the Creator and the image of God. What is meant by the image of God? In the Colossian passage image speaks of the resemblance between God the Father and the Son. “In Col. 1:15 Christ is described as the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου. To modern logic this seems to be a contradiction, for how can there be an image of something which is invisible and without form? The peculiarity of the expression is related to that of the ancient concept, which does not limit image to a functional representation present to human sense but also thinks of it in terms of an emanation, of a revelation of the being with a substantial participation (μετοχή) in the object. Image is not to be understood as a magnitude which is alien to the reality and present only in the consciousness. It has a share in the reality. Indeed, it is the reality. Thus εἰκὼν does not imply a weakening or a feeble

copy of something. It implies the illumination of its inner core and essence.” *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (2:389). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. We see, then, that the Son's being the image of God means that He is the perfect representation of the person and attributes of God, and thus God. The Hebrews passage is a little different, but speaks of the same reality that is presented by the Son being the image of God. The writer of Hebrews stated that the Son is the express image of the person of God. The image in this sense gives us a picture of a stamp that leaves its exact impression upon the document that is stamped. Jesus is said to bear the exact imprint of the character of God. If He does so, then He is God, because one cannot be exactly like God without being God.

We then find that the Son is the radiance of the splendor and glory of the Father. He simply shines forth the glorious character of the Father in every way possible. That is why John stated that the glory that was seen in Christ was the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. The glory that radiated from Jesus was manifestedly (See 1Tim 3:16) the Divine glory of the Father; yet it was the glory of the Son as well.

In both the Colossian and the Hebrew passage Jesus is spoken of as the Creator and sustainer of the worlds. Everything was created by Him [Nothing was created without Him (See Jn 1:3).], all things are sustained by Him, and all things were created for Him. For the average Bible reader it is not difficult to understand that there is no Creator beside God, and thus Jesus is God.

(Note: The Colossian and Johannine use of the word “begotten” in reference to the Son is used by some to insist that Jesus was the Son only by incarnation. This is impossible due to the fact that the Son was the Son of God before He was incarnate (See Isa 9:6; Jn 3:16,17 where the Son is said to have been given and sent as opposed to being created or made.). The Scriptures obviously describe the Son of God as having existed before the Creation.)

Having considered the fact that the worlds were made by the Son, we find new meaning when we read, “*Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*” (Ps 33:8-9) KJV God the Father spoke, and God the Son acted. God the Father and God the Son both created by means of Divine fiat.

The Spirit of God As Seen in The Creation

When we read the Genesis account of the creation of the heavens and the earth we read, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” (Gen 1:1-2) KJV It is readily seen that the Spirit of God was active in the creation of the worlds. Now we must determine who this Spirit of God is. Considering the fact that God is the only Creator we are convinced that the Spirit is a divine person. Seeing that there are those who do not readily take this for granted, let us search the Scriptures to see if this is so.

One thing that leads us to understand that the Holy Spirit is divine is the fact that He is spoken of as having the divine incommunicable attributes. That is, the Holy Spirit has attributes that belong only to God.

He is eternal as God is eternal. “*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*” (Ps 90:1,2) KJV “*If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” (Heb 9:13,14) KJV

The Holy Spirit is also spoken of as being omniscient. All knowledge belongs to God and no one else. “*The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the*

thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb 4:12,13) KJV This attribute also belongs to the Spirit of God. *“The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1 Cor 2:10) KJV*

The Spirit of God is also spoken of as being omnipresent, which is also a divine attribute. *“Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.” (Jer 23:23,24) KJV* *“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” (Ps 139:7-12) KJV*

Finally, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as being omnipotent just as God is omnipotent. *“I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” (Rev 19:6) KJV* *“The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.” (Luke 1:35-37) KJV*

The New Testament also speaks of the Holy Spirit as being equal to Christ. *“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (Jn 14:16-18) KJV* Jesus promised that the Spirit was going to come to His people. At the same time, He equated the presence of the Spirit with the Father by saying that He would not leave them fatherless. Jesus also equated the Spirit with Himself by saying that He (Jesus) would come to them. That is why the indwelling of the Spirit (See Rom 8:9; Eph 1:13,14) is spoken of as Christ being in us (Col 1:27). The Spirit is equal in essence and glory to the Father and the Son. In fact, the Spirit is spoken of as being the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, and Christ in us. *“But ye are not 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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Rom 8:9-10) KJV*

These things being so, we can be assured that the Spirit of God that was hovering over the face of the waters which were upon the earth was indeed the Divine Spirit who now indwells the people of God and empowers His church. This Divine Spirit is the giver of life, just as the Son of God gives life (See Jn 1:1-4; 5:21-29). *“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” (Job 33:4) KJV* (See also Job 26:13; Isa 40:12-14) It is this same Spirit of whom the Psalmist spoke when he said, *“Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.” (Ps 104:30) KJV* The Spirit proceeds from the Father eternally (See Jn 15:26), was sent forth and was active in the creation of the worlds, and is sent forth performing creative work even today (See Jn 3:1-8; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Tit 3:4-8).

Concluding Thoughts

One may wonder why a person would take the time to write over four thousand words to establish the truth of the Trinity from the Genesis account of the creation. The answer can be summed up in one word: worship. To worship we must know the truth about God, because worship must be in truth (See Jn 4:24). The creation account bids us to worship one God in three persons, the God who

created all things. None other is worthy of our worship. *“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” (Ps 33:8-9) KJV*