

# **The Doctrine of the Trinity**

The doctrine of the trinity is not clearly mentioned in the NT.

I wrote an extensive critique of another scholar's work back several years ago.

Anthony Buzzard, a British scholar wrote a book against the doctrine of the trinity.

But he also denies the divinity of Christ.

The deity of Christ is certainly expressed in the NT.

"In the beginning was the Word.  
The Word was with God and the  
Word was God." John 1:1

Not just in John's gospel.

There is a famous text in *1 Cor 8:6*  
where Paul speaks of God the  
Father AND Jesus the Christ as  
creator of ALL things.

“but to us God is one the Father, from whom all things [come] and in whom we [are], (ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, και ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν) and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things [come] and in whom we [are] (δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα, και ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν).”

These are just two of the clearest  
examples – there are many more.

[I have an extensive list in the PDF]

# Larry Hurtado:

identify him with YHWH in the Old Testament.<sup>5</sup> Hurtado reminds us that in the LXX YHWH is translated as *kurios*,

In this astonishingly bold association of Jesus with God, Paul adapts wording from the tradition Jewish confession of God's uniqueness, known as the Shema, from Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Kyrios heis estin [LXX], translating Heb. Yahweh 'echad). *Lord Jesus Christ*, p.114

In the next paragraph I take both Buzzard and Bart Ehrman to task for failing to be clearly objective.

Finally, on the deity of Jesus:  
When Thomas refuses to believe that Jesus rose from the dead until

he puts his finger in the holes of  
Jesus' hands...

When Jesus appears to Thomas he  
exclaims: "My Lord and my God."

Thomas confesses,  
"My Lord and my God"  
(ὁ κύριός μου καί ὁ θεός μου).

Critics like to say that WE  
misunderstand the NT references  
to Jesus as divine.

But as early as Ignatius of Antioch,  
the bishop of Syria around 120 AD:

"There is one Physician who is  
possessed both of flesh and spirit;  
**both made and not made;**  
God existing in flesh;  
true life in death;  
**both of Mary and of God;**  
first possible and then impossible,  
even Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Ltr to Ephesians 7 (short version)*

The divinity of Jesus was never  
questioned...only the specifics of  
HOW was He both God and Man.

The difficulty that develops in Christian history is having highly educated Church fathers who are trying to *figure out the dual natures of Christ* – was He God OR was He a Man...OR was He both?

This is a discussion that we cannot take on right now.

It was defined by the early Church as a *mystery* – I like that.

[10min]

Throughout early Christianity... in the NT documents and in the earliest Christian writers,

All of them believed in the Holy Spirit.

Defining **what** the HS was or **who He is** and

HOW "He" interacts with Jesus and the Father was written about, debated and finally also defined as *a mystery*.

These questions and debates were addressed at the Council of Nicea in 325AD.

The main reason the council was called is because there was a



presbyter from modern day Libya (North Africa) named Arius who started teaching that Jesus was not eternal.

His big statement that got him into trouble was:

IF the Son was "begotten," then there must have been a time when He was "not" [did not exist].

This caused an uproar which led to verbal fights among Christians in North Africa...

and eventually led to violence.

[13min]

A lot of Protestants blame Emperor Constantine for all kinds of things.

Several years ago I devoted 2 years of study/research to better understand Constantine.

I have a series of articles on the man on my church history site.

Many complain:

- that he was not a real Christian
- that his conversion was fake

- that Nicea should be rejected because it was called by CG.

Well, what you need to know is that the bishops of N.Africa asked CG to join them at the Council Arles in 314AD.

Two years prior CG had issued the Edict of Milan, giving freedom of religion to ALL Roman citizens.

They were having a conflict with another church leader named Donatus.

So the fact that CG called the Council of Nicea is easily explained.

He had already been invited and attended another council of bishops.

MOST of the bishops were thrilled to have a Christian Emperor.

At Nicea the bishops tried to define the deity of Jesus.

It was contentious and there was a lot of arguing.

But they finally came to a decision:

- they condemned Arius and his views of Jesus
- they drafted a creed and were told to sign it
- out of 200+ bishops only 3 refused to sign the creed

They were exiled, stripped of their bishopric and told to live in a different region.

## The Nicean Creed 325AD:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;

By whom all things were made  
[both in heaven and on earth];

Who for us men, and for our  
salvation, came down and was  
incarnate and was made man;

He suffered, and the third day he  
rose again, ascended into heaven;

From thence he shall come to  
judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.

[But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable' - they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]

This is the beginning of proper trinitarian doctrine and was later demanded by the Church.



The Nicean Creed was rewritten in 381 at the First Council of Constantinople.

Here is the revised Holy Spirit section:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
**who proceeds from the Father and  
the Son,**  
who with the Father and the Son is  
adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the  
prophets.

QUESTIONS?