

The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity – Part 3

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Answering Common Attacks

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14
Preached on: Saturday, May 18, 1991

Christian Answers of Austin, Texas
9009 Martha's Drive
Austin, TX 78717

Website: www.biblequery.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/christiananswers

The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity
with Bob L. Ross, Author, Speaker, and Director of Pilgrim Publications,
Mark McNeil, Speaker, 1990 Valedictorian of Texas Bible College,
Larry Wessels, Co-host for Pilgrim Publications Presents.

The Trinity Defended Against Attacks
(program #3 in series)

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matthew 28:19

Larry Wessels: Greetings and welcome once again to our program. I'm Larry Wessels, your co-host for Pilgrim Publications Presents. I want to thank you for taking the time out of the day to be with us and analyze a topic that I think is very important to the body of Christ. This is part 3 of a continuing series that we've doing on the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and we'll continue that series today and that topic, but first I'd like to introduce my co-host for this program who's been with us for this entire series and a special guest that we have here in studio today just for the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity. But first, let me introduce my co-host, Bob L. Ross. Bob is Director of Pilgrim Publications. He's written many books, several books on different topics.

Bob L. Ross: Larry, if our viewers have been following us, we're now into the third program and they will know that we have tried to maintain somewhat of a sequence to this discussion on the Trinity, but the heart and core of it is we're emphasizing the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is God in the flesh. We want to keep that every before the viewers because that is the foundation of Christianity, that Christ is God in the flesh, the Son of God, and through faith in him we have everlasting life. Whatever we contend for doctrinally or antagonistically toward other groups theoretically speaking, we do not want to detract from the basic foundational stone upon which the church is built. "Upon this rock I will build my church," and this rock is that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and however we may differ with others and however they may conflict with us on theoretical thinking, we want them to know that we are committed to this as the foundation of our

hope of salvation and we hope that they too will share with us in the faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, thou art the Christ, and by faith in him we have a relationship with God.

Larry: Very well said. And our special guest for this series, Mark McNeil. Mark, you were valedictorian of Texas Bible College in Houston, Texas, that's where it's located?

Mark McNeil: Right.

Larry: Now, they have an interesting belief system at that Bible college. Would you care to expound on that and relate it into the topic today?

Mark: Well, the Bible college that I went to is a school connected with the United Pentecostal Church which is based upon the redefining of the doctrine of God, at least from the standpoint of the Trinitarian to a modalistic concept which takes the concepts of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as revealed in the Bible and takes them to be modes of God's manifestation rather than essential relationships within the nature of God. That also affects some of their other doctrines such as their doctrine of water baptism that it has to be in the formula "in the name of Jesus Christ," rather than as the Trinitarians have historically held "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and that's a discussion in and of itself to discuss the scriptural teaching on that. Then they hold being a part of the Pentecostal movement, one of the more extreme of the Pentecostal movement taking the Spirit baptism to be an essential part of salvation. And we've been discussing, 1. the biblical basis of the doctrine of the Trinity to refute those that would deny that or those that are seriously searching for the truth of that; and then secondly, we've spent a considerable amount of time on the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity primarily because that's one of the areas that are attacked quite a bit and so that's what necessitates this type of reply and I think today we'll have a good time or in this time of responding to some of the objections to the doctrine of the Trinity. So I'm glad to be here.

Larry: Thank you so much and Mark has just brought up one of the main things we'll be talking about in this particular program, objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, which, of course, a lot of it ties into what Bob was saying about the deity of Christ being the core of everything and, of course, we're going to get into that.

First, we're going to get into some charts here. We're going to define, once again, what the Trinity is in a basic easy way. The creeds of Christendom throughout church history give much more detailed and concise, well-defined definitions for your benefit if you'd like to check into those. I kind of like the Athanasian Creed myself on that one. But I would like to turn here to a chart. I know Bob is going to have something to say about our diagram and I think it's some words that need to be said. It will tie in with the idea that even though we're going to have a diagram here on this chart that kind of outlines the Trinity, it's not meant, by any means, to coincide with the actual way God...God is infinite and we're finite. There's no analogy or example that you can come up with that's going to even be close to God. All we can do in our little way is try to come up with some

small way that might make it a little easier for people to understand so you see a little chart here with a diagram, it's just to point out a couple of things but by no means is it to be taken like this is the way God is or anything, it's just a simple little diagram to outline a couple of points that I particularly wanted to make on this subject.

So now if we can go to our chart, we'll take a quick look here and see what we can see. We've got the definition of the Trinity. Now, I've just come up with a simple one here. There are some more well-defined, long, concise ones but this seems to be a nice simple way to state it quickly: within the nature of the one God are three eternally distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now, as I was just mentioning, we have this diagram down below. Now, Bob, before we even did this show you were saying some very good things that I'd like you to bring out for our viewers' sakes about diagrams. You were also mentioning points of light there a minute ago, and I'd like you to just say a few things.

Bob: Well, Larry, you have put a diagram up there and the reason that we want to comment on this is because in so many books and articles and writings about the Trinity, there is an effort put forth because the human mind is forever trying to express concepts to others that would convey the truth or the thought that the writer is trying to express, and oftentimes we run into diagrams such as this one. This happens to be a triangle. Now, on the front of a book I have here by Cal Beisner, you notice he has three circles here and he's dealing with the three persons in God. And sometimes you have other diagrams that we could go on endlessly here maybe, talking about how men have tried to express the Trinity or some concept similar to the Trinity, for that matter. But Mr. Bickerstaff in his book on the Trinity hit the nail on the head and I have the statement here in the book. He says, "All human illustrations of this great mystery must fail." But nevertheless, despite the fact that all human illustrations fail to represent God, we do struggle and strain and strive to express, after all, we don't even comprehend God in our minds so any comprehension we have of God is short of the mark so maybe this would justify our illustrations which are also short of the mark.

But there is one illustration that Bickerstaff gives in this book which I thought was very unique and you notice that in Beisner's book he has those colors of those circles. I want to read you here what Bickerstaff says about light. Now, the reason I like this illustration is because of the fact that the Bible does say God is light. It doesn't say God is a triangle and it doesn't say that God is a circle or whatnot, but it does say God is light and here's something that Bickerstaff pointed out in his book about light. "The prismatic spectrum," and by that we mean that ray of light that we get in the creation by which we have this thing we call light which gives us the opportunity to see things; we could not see anything without light. One of the early creations of God was the light and it's such a mystery. We know what we're talking about when we say light but we really don't know what we're talking about when we say light because you see it out there but really you can't see it out there, all you see is what is reflecting from the light that falls upon it. But what this is is a spectrum of light ray "that comes upon the objects and it consists in three spectra of nearly equal length, each of uniform color superimposed one upon another and that the colors which the actual spectrum exhibits arise from the mixture of the uniform

colors of these three spectra superimposed." Now, all printers and all photographers and workers in those creative fields of books and magazines and whatnot, they know what I'm talking about here. We're talking about the magenta or the red, as some might call it, and the yellow and the cyan or the blue, as it might be called, as in the printing trade.

Now, these three things, when you take a picture in full color and you want to reproduce that picture, how do you do it? Well, you've got to separate those three colors: the magenta, the yellow and the cyan, the red, the yellow and the blue. So you take it down to a color company, well, that's not necessarily the name of it. I deal with one in Houston called The Color Company, and they will take that and through the cameras which they use, the instruments that they use, they will filter out each of the other colors and they'll make a separate film of the magenta and the yellow and the blue. Now, when that printer takes it, he will put those down one at a time, one on top of the other, and when it comes out, you've reproduced in printing the living color.

Now, what he is talking about here, these three rays of light, when you combine these three constituent lights you get pure white light. Pure white light. Now this is an illustration of what we're talking about when we say we struggle to illustrate God in the Trinity. If God is light and there are three rays that you kind of sort out of light, red, yellow and blue, we can observe each of those colors by and of itself. It's still light. It's still light and then we can push them back together and it's one pure white light. We don't see any one of the other colors now: we don't see the blue; we don't see the red; we don't see the yellow.

Now, all human illustrations fail as we have admitted but let us just think for a minute about this. We isolate out the red and we look at the Lord Jesus Christ perhaps. We isolate out the blue and we look at God the Father. And we isolate out the yellow and we look at the Holy Spirit. Then we put them all blended together in one and we have the one pure white light of the one God. Now, that is a human effort and yet God is light. He compares himself to that which is divisible this way just for the sake of observation. So we're going to admit that this we cannot reproduce God in illustrations but we're not going to say that we cannot learn something because Jesus himself used parables in illustrating the word of God and in illustrating spiritual truths and eternal truths and vital truths. And as Spurgeon said, you can never make a parable stand on four legs; it can never be perfect. So we don't claim these things to be perfection and when someone comes along and he begins to knock us for this and criticize this and say, "Oh well, they make the Trinity in the form of a created image," or something like that, they are completely distorting and misrepresentating the truth. We are not any more doing that than when Jesus took a parable and illustrated something that pertained to God when he said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." How many things in the Bible is Jesus compared to that are finite? A vine. A door.

Larry: Bread of life.

Bob: Someone wrote a book on it one time, just how many symbols there are in the Bible. A root out of dry ground. The rose. The lily. And on and on and on. A lion. So

we're doing no injustice to the Scripture or violation of the Scripture by showing some kind of a simple design to emphasize a principle and that principle is a three and yet a oneness. A three and yet a oneness and that's what those anti-Trinitarians don't really like to admit. They like to charge us with believing tri-theism or three gods. They do not like to admit that we do not really adhere to the three god idea.

Larry: They were accusing us of believing in three gods but never making a valid point out of it since Trinitarians deny polytheism, they believe only in monotheism, the one true God who manifested himself as three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now, with that said, let's go back to this chart now as Bob, I think, so brilliantly illustrated with not that's it perfect illustration, as we said, and neither is this. All I wanted to show by this chart is what we have here is the Trinity, the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Son, but as you can see by these lines, we're saying that the Son is not the Father. The Father is not the Holy Spirit. The Son is not the Holy Spirit and vice versa. So we're denying Sabellianism where Jesus has just manifested himself as the Father or the Holy Spirit is really the Son or something like this. We're denying that in this little diagram. We're definitely saying that the Father is distinct from the Son; the Father is distinct from the Holy Spirit; and likewise with the other two persons of the Godhead. What we are saying is the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God. Like yellow, like red, and like blue, they make the one bright light as Bob was talking about in this little diagram. Then to go to the Scripture verse here, we have Matthew 28:19, it says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." You could also go to like 2 Corinthians 13:14. It says, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." You have all three members of the Godhead being mentioned in these two passages.

Now, Mark or Bob, would y'all like to make any brief reference to these Scriptures and how they....

Bob: I want Mark to but before he does, I want to say something but I want Mark to give an exposition of this because he can give it from a background of, you might say, with the oneness doctrine as the background of it and do it. But before we leave this idea of the God is light and the color thing that I was talking about, Larry, for years I have kind of made a sideline or an avocation of mine to study color and some of its psychological impacts upon men and the color associations that human beings make and various things, but I'm not doing that simply as a fleshly type motivation, as such, it was inspired, so to speak, by the Scripture, that I study and think in terms of the significance of colors and the Scripture that got me going on this was Ephesians 3:11 where it refers to that "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." If you look up that Greek word "manifold," it means "multi-tinted or many tinted or the word variegated." Now, have you ever been down a paint store to pick out paint for your home or whatever? You know, they'll have charts and they'll show you all kinds of tints and I don't know how many hundreds of tints there are classified in the paint world so that they actually manufacture a paint that you could buy but I know there are multitudes of them. There are many, many, many tints.

Well, the Bible says here that the wisdom of God is many tinted or multi-tinted or variegated. Now, what is the wisdom of God? Well, the wisdom of God is everything that proceeds out from God. Now, how did he create this world? The word of his mouth and the word of his mouth manifests the wisdom of his mind. And what do we see in this world? We see colors, don't we? We see green grass. We see blue skies. We see yellow sunshiny days. We see on and on and on we could go describing the various tints and the shades of color. Everything we see, we see in a form that is colored and where did this color come from? There is no way that you and I could invent a color. God invented them all so everything that we see is a creation of God, right? And it has a color, right? And it was created by God with this color, right? And everything that was created was created out of the mind of God so what is this telling us? That the color principle that we have here, God is light, we see these things because of the light ray that falls on it, in effect, God is creating these colors by which we respond to things and react to things and we're using color every day in our lives: we're wearing clothes of a certain color; we're trying to match up color; we buy a car of a certain color; a carpet for our home of a certain color; and so on and so on. And I don't want to get off on a long lecture on the color but what I'm emphasizing is this truth that this thing about color is not just some idle human carnal thing, color is a creation of God. Light is a creation of God. And if God is light, this principle of dividing and observing him as colors is not something we can take all that lightly just to say, "Well, this was something of man." This is something of God, my friend.

Larry: That's true. Well, now we're going to have to rush through here because we don't have that much time and I've got a lot of charts so we're going to have to get into it. But with that exposition of color, we see I've got some color here on this chart and, Mark, I'd like you to get into this a little bit. I know from a little background in Greek that I have, Granville Sharp's rule would come into play on some of these verses, particularly this one about the distinction of persons. Would you like to make any expositions on this particular passage?

Mark: Well, I'll say first off that these two passages you've given have been important in the history of Christian thought primarily because they pull together the terms that we're using here. It doesn't take someone with a high education to see when you read Matthew 28:19 that you have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We were talking a little while ago about the significance of three with regard to God and it's quite apparent with the passage such as this why aren't there any more mentioned here, and then when you study the uniqueness of these terms, you find that they are quite unique in relationship to God. You see this similar thing in 2 Corinthians 13:14. So that's the first thing that comes to mind and, of course, Granville Sharp's rule, the part that's applied to this particular passage is when you have more than one noun that's joined together by the Greek word kai or the conjunction kai, and yet each noun is preceded by the definite article then that means that you are referring to more than one person.

Larry: So you have the, the, the and you have the kai, and.

Mark: Right. If you just had, for instance a good example would be John 3:5, "Except man be born of water and of spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," the word kai there joins together those two nouns but neither one of them is preceded by the definite article or the word the. That means they could very well be referring to the same subject. But here you have, at the very least you have a definite attempt by the writer to stress the distinction between the subjects. He could have said, "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," and just joined them together with kai, but instead he puts before each noun the definite article which means he is wanting to make a statement about the distinctive nature of each and I think that's the very least we can make of it. Now, Granville Sharp's rule is a controverted thing but I think at least we can make that type of a statement with regard to that passage of Scripture.

Larry: Very well said. And with time flying, I want to race through a lot of these charts very quickly so we can get to some of the arguments set forth by some of these anti-Trinitarian groups. Basically, this is going to be kind of a quick rehash of some of the things you said in our first program and so I won't linger on them very long. We have the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament in creation, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning," Elohim, "God made the heavens and the earth." Also Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image," 27. Isaiah 44:24. What's interesting here, this is not so much Trinitarian as you just find that it says, "I stretched out the heavens by myself," but yet we see over here he's using these plural names and stuff and over here, you get "myself."

Mark: I know we're running short on time but I wanted to make a comment about Genesis 1:26-27 which I think is a significant point: the Scripture says, "God said, Let us make man in our image," and the next verse says, "and so God created man in his own image." You have it reverting from the plural to the singular and you have the same thing in Isaiah 44:24. When the singular appears, that means you're referring to the being of God which there is none other than him, but when you see the plural, that means that that God is revealing something about himself internally.

Larry: That's an excellent point.

Mark: So I think that that can be seen. It can be seen very clearly in Genesis 1:26.

Larry: Good point. Of course we see again in the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:6-8, "Let us confuse their languages." Things of this nature. Three distinct persons in Isaiah 48:16, it says, "Come near to me, listen to this, from the first I have not spoken in secret. From the time it took place, I was there and now the Lord God has sent me and his Spirit." An interesting way of talking if it's in a monotheistic sense but yet we have basically three different egos or centers of consciousness or persons mentioned there.

Two distinct persons as Jehovah, we find that in Genesis 19:24. Dr. Moray in the debate he had with David Bernard, he mentioned Proverbs 30:4 where, I'll just let the viewers with time being short, I can't read all these passages, but check out Proverbs 30:4. I hadn't even realized that one was in there before.

Mark: I noticed another one, if I could. I don't want to take all the time up but another passage like that would be the Psalm where it says, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit down at my right hand."

Larry: That's coming up in the chart.

Mark: A significant thing about that verse is Jesus used it to prove that he was greater than David and so that indicates that to be the Lord there is meaning that he's greater than a man which would indicate his deity and so you have deity speaking to deity.

Larry: Exactly. That was Psalm 110:1.

Alright, then the Hebrew usage of echad in Deuteronomy 6:4, basically showing that composite unity of the word. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one," but the word "one" there in the Hebrew is "echad" which has the idea of composite unity, not just a singular one. They could have used other Hebrew words....

Bob: Larry, you've got all that bracketed under Old Testament. Now, I know I'm digging in the New Testament to get this but it refers you back to the Old Testament. You know the case of Melchizedek early in the book of Genesis, he just comes out of nowhere, Abraham pays tithes to him. Now, Paul's commentary on that or the writer of the book of Hebrews if it was someone else other than Paul, some people seem to question whether Paul wrote that book, but in the seventh chapter, Melchizedek is presented there as a type of Christ and one of the things that is said about him was he is without father, without mother, without beginning of days, without end of life. Now, what he's affirming there is the deity of Christ, the Son of God, and let me get it right here. "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life but made like unto the Son of God abideth a priest continually." Now, putting this idea of Trinity into the concept here, how did Paul who wrote this, how did he come up with this idea that Melchizedek was a type of Jesus Christ here, deity, if they didn't have, as you've been pointing out in these Scriptures, a concept of Trinity? You know, some people try to say, "Oh well, you know, the Trinity came," they blame it on Tertullian. Is he the one?

Larry: The Council of Nicea.

Bob: Who was it that used the word "Trinity" first.

Larry: That was Tertullian.

Bob: Was that Tertullian? Well, anyway, they say he started this idea. But now, what about here he's saying that Melchizedek is a type of Christ who did not have any descent. He did not have any beginning of days. So you've got to give him the quality of deity and Melchizedek back in the Old Testament is the type that he's referring to.

Larry: That's a good point and, of course, we're going to bring up a chart here shortly that's going to get into a lot of the deity of Christ because this is critical to the whole doctrine of the Trinity.

Moving on in the New Testament, we have at Christ's incarnation in Luke 1:35, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, so the Holy One will be born, will be called the Son of God." You've got all three members of the Trinity mentioned there.

At Christ's baptism, Matthew 3:16-17. This is where the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove and a voice out of heaven says, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." You've got all three there again.

In Christ's teachings. This is on the teachings of the Paraclete, the Comforter who will come, the Holy Spirit. And constantly in these passages, for instance, and Mark had brought these up in our first show in this series, John 14:26, John 15:26, you have things like where it says, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." Constantly he's referring one to the other. The Father sent him, he's going to say this... It's like you have three different people going on there.

I also like what John 16:13 says about the Holy Spirit will only tell what he hears which is interesting if you think about that through, about this whole concept of the Trinity.

Mark: Even one writer that I read on that particular passage said it is giving us a conceptual distinction but it's not a real distinction. So even a verse as strong as that has to even cause those type of people to say, "Yeah, there's a distinction but we're not going to admit it's a real distinction."

Larry: Right. It's sort of like what some groups say, "Well, this is a lesser form of worship." Latria versus dulia or whatever you want to call it. But anyway, that's some other theology.

Okay, moving on down. Apostolic teaching. You've got all these references here so if you're watching at home and the camera has zoomed in on it, write these down. I don't have time to go into all of these but it just basically gives you a mention of the three members of the Godhead throughout by the apostles.

And you had mentioned this, once again, your chart is matching up pretty good with mine in the first show about the Trinity raises Jesus from the dead. The Father raises Jesus in Acts 3:26 and this other passage. Jesus raises himself in John 2:19-21. The Spirit raises Jesus in Romans 8:11. And God raises Christ in Acts 17:31.

Then moving on from there, this is where a lot of battleground takes place with one that is Pentecostal and other groups that deny the Trinity, that there are distinct persons in the Godhead. They are distinct from each other. Jesus is not the Father, the Holy Spirit is not

the Son, and so forth. One of my favorite passages in this regard is John 8:16-18. It says, "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true," this is Jesus talking, "for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true," getting that from Deuteronomy 17:6. "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me," which is interesting because he's also referencing back to John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Now, this is pretty weird terminology if Jesus is the Father and if he is all just one. He's talking like there's different people here and he even mentions a testimony of two men to throw this distinction in here.

Then, of course, you brought out John 17:5 which had a tremendous impact on your coming out of the oneness theology. You can go to Philippians 2:5-9 which also gets into some of these things along with John 5:23, Hebrews 1:4,6,9.

Moving down the page we see Luke 3:22, "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him," that goes into that other passage we mentioned before from Matthew, "and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Once again, Holy Ghost here, Jesus there, and God the Father there.

Ephesians 2:18, "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Him, Christ. Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Unto the Father, God the Father. See also these other passages, John 1:1. And y'all were mentioning and Bob was bringing this up in a previous show also that John 10:30, "I and my Father are one," actually the Greek word there actually is ?? and that means "we are." "I and my Father, we are one." If you take it literally into the Greek and the neuter word for "one" which is ?? is used implying essential unity but not the personal unity and you can compare that with John 17:21-23.

So as I give a rapid fire presentation of these verses because we've still got a lot of material to cover, I'm kind of running through here, but this hopefully will give you a good basis. If you missed show #1, Mark went into a lot of these passages in some detail. I urge you to get ahold of that and see that too since I don't have the time to expound on these like I would like.

But now let's go to this one and it asks the question, "Who is God?" And this goes back into what you were saying before in the first show also, Mark. I have simply put more verses to it than you had in your charts, but the Scriptures plainly teach there is one God and then we've got plenty of verses to get into. You can get into these Isaiah passages right through here and over and over again God says, "There is no other god. I don't even know of any other god. There is no god formed before me or after me," and so forth. In 1 Corinthians 8:6, "though there be gods many and lords many, to us there is only one God." And on and on the Scriptures go. There's a lot more that could be listed on this chart besides what we have up here. This is just a sampling, as a matter of fact, and of course, the Father is God, plenty of verses. Almost no one disagrees with that. Jesus is God. There are a lot more passages than even this listed here. I've got another chart that gets into this so I won't elaborate at this moment, but going down, the Holy Spirit is God and then there are plenty of passages that get into teaching that the Holy Spirit is not only

personal, he's mentioned in personal pronouns throughout the Scriptures but he is called Jehovah throughout, particularly in Acts 5. And what we get here is a deduction. We find in the Scriptures the Father is God. We find in the Scriptures Jesus is God. We find in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is God. Yet we find in the Scriptures there is only one God leading us to the conclusion that, well, if the Father is God, Jesus is God, the Holy Spirit is God yet there is only one God, these three must be the one God, ie the Trinity.

So with that said, I'm going to move to the final part of our show here and I'm going to let you guys get more into the discussion. In fact, I think so I can mix it up just a little bit here, I'm going to flip this chart to the other side and, well, actually I'll just bring up Mark's chart here first so we can let him get into this some. Mark, we were talking about before that you've got the Trinitarian concept but then you've got heresies on both sides of it: one's to one extreme, and one to the other extreme. Now, you're coming from the United Pentecostal background which denies the Trinity but says there is just one God in three different modes so Jesus is the Father, Jesus is the Holy Spirit, and such as this. Now, these modalists, these people that believe this ?? they have arguments that they like to bring up attacking Trinitarian beliefs. Now, you have on your chart here mention some of these arguments and I'd like you to run through them for our audience just to help those that would like to know some good brief answers to be able to deal with these people when they run into them.

Mark: Okay, a number of them I can think that we've already dealt with them, but we'll run through them. 1. The Bible teaches that there is only one God. This is the argument that they would use. The doctrine of the Trinity divides him into three Gods. Of course, this is a fallacy because it assumes its conclusion that you believe in three Gods and I will say that many of them actually do believe that Trinitarians affirm the there are three Gods. Now, they think that they'll actually say that and so when they turn upon a Scripture like Deuteronomy 6:4 or other verses which proclaim Christ to be God or there to be only one God, rather, they think that they have already overthrown the doctrine of Trinity by that, but that's not so. This violates the very statement of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Number 2: Jesus claimed that when you see him you're seeing the Father, John 14:7-9. This means he was the Father. Now, this is a fallacy as well because to claim that when you see him you are seeing the Father is not equivalent to saying he was the Father and I'll take another passage like you can see several places where Jesus would say something like, "He that receives you receives me." Or something to that effect. It does not necessarily mean that they are the same person and in this case it's simply meaning that in Christ we see the attributes of the Father expressed in him. This is really a claim to be co-equal with the Father more than the other, but that is a good verse for the deity of Christ but it is not a good verse for proving that Jesus is the Father in relationship to him as the Son.

Number 3: Isaiah 9:6 calls Jesus the Father. This is a verse that is oftentimes used that says, "His name will be called the everlasting Father." Now, the reply to this would be simply that it does not say he is Father in relationship to the Son, it simply says he's the

everlasting Father which can be translated very easily, the everlasting originator of the originator of eternity, so that is a matter of looking at the Hebrew language a little more closely and finding out that it's not speaking about the Father/Son relationship of the New Testament but a whole different subject.

Larry: Also, just to jump in on that, it could be translated Father of eternity, meaning eternal, and I'm just reading right out of Bowman's thing here. He says compare other names for him with word "Father," and you have Abalon, Father of strength in 2 Samuel 23:31, and he mentions many other ones in Exodus 6:24 and 1 Corinthians 2:16 so I just wanted to throw that in for the back-up for what you're saying.

Mark: That's very good and it is borne out by an examination of Hebrew words and how they're formed.

Number 4: who was the Father? Jesus according to Luke 1:35, this Scripture says that the Holy Ghost would overshadow Mary and she would be found with child of the Holy Ghost and from this it is claimed that the Holy Ghost is the father of the son. This is a fallacy as well because it does not even recognize that Luke 1:35 is talking about the physical birth of Christ, the Trinitarian doctrine is talking about eternity past. This verse is simply affirming that the Holy Spirit formed in the womb of Mary the body of Christ and it does not refer to the eternal relationship of the Father, the Son, which is totally beyond the context of Luke 1:35.

Number 5: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are titles, not the name. This is based on Matthew 28:19 and it is a commonly used argument even though you may not think at first sight that it is a worthy argument. They consider it to have a lot of stock in it because in Matthew 28:19 it says, baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This has been dealt with two ways by Trinitarians, one is to say that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit do have the common name of God or Yahweh or the self-existent one or, secondly, it's just a matter of grammar that you don't say baptized in the names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit because that would indicate that we're trying to talk about all the names used for each one in all of Scripture which is not what he's trying to say, and we could explain that more clearly if we had time, but that's just the basic idea of it.

Number 6: the doctrine of the Trinity did not exist before its formulation at Nicea. We've already shown that to be not true.

Number 7: the terms used to describe the Trinity are not in the Bible. We've already dealt with that as well. These terms are simply our attempt to express what the Bible is saying and, for instance, the word co-equal, I had a discussion with a man that denied the Trinity one time and he said the word co-equal is not in the Bible and I said, "Well, Philippians 2 said that who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He said, "Well, it's not the word co-equal." I said, "What does the prefix 'co' mean?" It means with and the Scripture says he was equal with God and so this term is simply stating what the Scriptures say in a concise term. That way we don't have to explain everything over

and over every time we say it. When I say that we believe in the Trinity, you know we're talking about what we've been talking about for the last two or three hours here. So it's just an easy way to refer to what the Scriptures teach.

Number 8: the Trinity is confusing and mysterious and therefore impractical. This is from our perspective a worthless argument because it denies or it does not understand that everything we talk about when we talk about God has an element of mystery to it. To our minds, because we are finite and limited and God is infinite and therefore we can only know in a limited way what is true infinitely or unlimited in nature with regard to God.

Number 9: John saw only one throne in heaven, not three persons. This one is constantly used. This is a faulty argument as well because it assumes that the doctrine of the Trinity states that there are three visible forms that are limited as we are. God is an infinite, omnipresent spirit. But in addition to that I could say that there are indications in the book of Revelation itself of the doctrine of the Trinity. For instance, Jesus said he would sit with his Father in his throne. Or in, I think it's chapter 4, the Scripture says that the Lamb of God steps up and takes the book out of the right hand of him who sits on the throne and then as the chapter proceeds, both the Lamb of God and the one sitting upon the throne are worshiped which indicates that both are God, and the distinction is maintained there. So that type of an argument really does not answer or affect the doctrine of the Trinity in any significant way.

Number 10: Jesus in the Godhead or the Godhead in Jesus. This is a very commonly asked question and it's actually the title of one of the booklets that they have put out that's been very popular through the years, and this type of question, again, is a fallacy. It is giving us an either/or situation: either this is true or that is true. The word "Godhead" simply means "God or deity." So the question is: is Jesus in the Godhead? Or we could state is Jesus God? Yes, Jesus is God. Or is the Godhead in Jesus? Is deity in Christ? Yes, deity is in Christ according to Colossians 2:9. So we would answer this question by saying, "Yes, if you correctly understand it, both statements are true."

So those are just some common arguments that are used. They basically fall on fallacies such as this first one claiming that Trinitarians deny the monotheistic concept of the Bible. That's not true and that disposes them of most of their positive argumentation that they use. The rest of the time they spend explaining away passages that would imply the doctrine of the Trinity.

Larry: That was a good, brief, concise refutation of some of their standard arguments and I think the Lord will use this to help many people in dealing with these arguments that they are for sure going to run into down the line.

Now that's taking it from one extreme, one of the heresies that's common in attacking the Trinity on one side of it, now what I've got here is a chart that with the remaining time I'll try to get as much as I can in in the time remaining. This comes from the other side, from the Arians, the ones that don't even believe in the modes and stuff. They just deny the deity of Christ. They say basically there is just one God, but they don't even consider

the modalism and the Sabellianism and coming from the other extreme. I'll go through this chart and see what we can come up with.

Basically the common arguments by Arians, basically like Jehovah's Witnesses, the Way International, there are other groups that fall in this line, cults and whatnot and they use these standard arguments. Some of these will match up with the ones Mark just went over because a lot of times people that attack the Trinity use the same arguments even if they have extremely different theologies; they're just united on attacking the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

Basically, as you see, point 1: the Trinity is beyond human reasoning. We've talked about this before in shows. Basically it goes back to Isaiah 55 which Bob brought up earlier, 8 through 9, God's ways are higher than our ways. Once again, you have the idea of the infinite and the finite, our finite minds trying to understand an infinite God. It just doesn't work. If I knew all there was to know about god, I would be God myself and it's as simple as that. So this argument is ridiculous right on its face.

Okay, the next argument that you'll hear a lot from Arians is the word Trinity is not found in the Bible. Mark just brought that up a minute ago, but there are a lot of arguments. Just because the word Trinity is not in the Bible, it's simply a theological term used to describe something of a doctrine that is in the Bible. I would ask Jehovah's Witnesses who usually use this, is the word Bible in the Bible? They use the word Bible all the time. Or kingdom hall, that's not in the Bible. Or theocratic organization or circuit servant. None of these things are in the Bible but the Jehovah's Witnesses use them but yet they turn around and use this against Trinitarians. It doesn't work.

Point 3: the concept of the Trinity is confusing. Now, Mark just brought that up a minute ago. Now, in 1 Corinthians 13:12 it says, "For we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Once again, there are just things that we don't see clearly. Once again, it's the same old thing about the finite trying to understand the infinite. I don't understand all there is about electricity or nuclear fission but I know it works and so this argument, though one thing I do know is that argument doesn't work.

Okay, part 4, number 4: the Trinity started at the Council of Nicea in 325. That's standard. We've already refuted that through church history.

Point 5: pagan religions, Babylon and Assyria, had triads of gods, the Trinity came from these. As we've talked about and Bob went into some detail on this in a previous broadcast, it's basically a post hoc fallacy. We also know that the Babylonians and the Assyrians believed in the flood, resurrection and things like this and Jehovah's Witnesses and so forth wouldn't deny the resurrection just because some pagans believed that before. It's just an argument that doesn't follow. They are really depending on the ignorance of people to buy that line.

Okay, number 6: if God and Trinity mean the same thing, how about John 1:1. It's that old argument where, well, if God is a Trinity, then you can put wherever you see the

word God in a Bible you can put in Trinity. So in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Trinity and the Trinity was with the Trinity and the Trinity was the Trinity." You know, and they're trying to trip you up, but we all know from our long expositions that not every time that you see in the Bible where it says God is it specifically talking about maybe the Trinity. It might be talking about God who is the Son or...

Mark: I'd also like to say on John 1:1 and that argument is used also by oneness people, the Greek text there actually makes a distinction between the one the Word was with and the one the Word was. It says, "and the Word was with God," the Greek says ????. It has the definite article before God but the latter part of the verse it says, kai theos en logos, it doesn't have the definite article before God. So what it's actually saying there without the article it would be stressing the nature of the subject; with the article, it's stressing a particular person and so in John 1:1 it would be saying the Word was with the God, identifying the specific person of the Father as is the general custom in Greek New Testament to put the definite article before God when it is signifying the Father. And then the latter part is going to stress that the Word was not only with God but he was God by his very nature which is what it's stressing there. But the Greek text does make a distinction between them.

Larry: That's true. Now, with time rapidly disappearing on us, I will continue to go through this chart.

Number 7: Deuteronomy 6:4, the Lord is one, not three. You hear that a lot from these heretics. We've already talked about it before about that word echad and the word there for one is really a composite unity. You get that with the spies that went into the Promised Land with the grapes and Adam and Eve with the one flesh and things of this nature.

Okay, point 8: Christ must be 1/3 God and, Mark, you just answered that a while ago in your chart. It kind of reminds me of asking the question: well, you've got space which has height, depth and distance, let's say, now try to cut that three ways. It just doesn't work. It's sort of like trying to cut a beam of light.

Okay, now to finish this off and wrap the show up, we've got point 9 here and this is your key thing. This ties right back into what Bob started the show off with. The Bible does not say Jesus is God. See verses such as Revelation 3:14, Colossians 1:15, John 14:28, John 3:16, etc. also Proverbs 8:22. They use places like he's the beginning of the creation of God; he's the firstborn of God; my Father is greater than I; the only begotten Son; and he's the creative wisdom here. Now, all these verses that Jehovah's Witnesses and other heretics use can be easily refuted and so we don't have time in this particular broadcast to go through but if they will write Pilgrim Publications, these can be refuted in detail from the Greek and from the biblical Scriptures.

But to finish off now and close down the show, to refute these arguments and others, we want to say that Jesus is God, the YHWH. In the Old Testament you have these descriptions of God, the YHWH, Jehovah, and descriptive terms of God in the Old

Testament here are Creator, Savior, God, I AM, First and Last, Rock, Light, Judge. There are many others that could be used. But in the New Testament, we find these titles here which are given to Jehovah of the Old Testament, they are in turn given to Jesus Christ in the New Testament according to these Scriptures right here.

Well, with that, we're out of time. I would like to thank y'all for joining us today. We're singing off now. If you have any further questions on these or other matters, please write us. The phone number and the mailing will come up at the end of the show. I'm Larry Wessels for Bob L. Ross and Mark McNeil thanking you for joining us in this special broadcast. God bless.

Please contact Christians Answers for free information on numerous subjects, important subjects such as the biblical doctrine of the Godhead, the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Free newsletters are available on the heretical position held by many unbiblical cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Oneness Pentecostals who deny the Trinity. Free newsletters are available on strange groups such as the King James Only-ites. To receive your free information, please call 512-218-8022 or email us at cdebater@aol.com. To see full length videos on these and other subjects, go to Yahoo video, type Larry Wessels into the search box and click on the icon for i_shoot_video or i_shoot_video2.