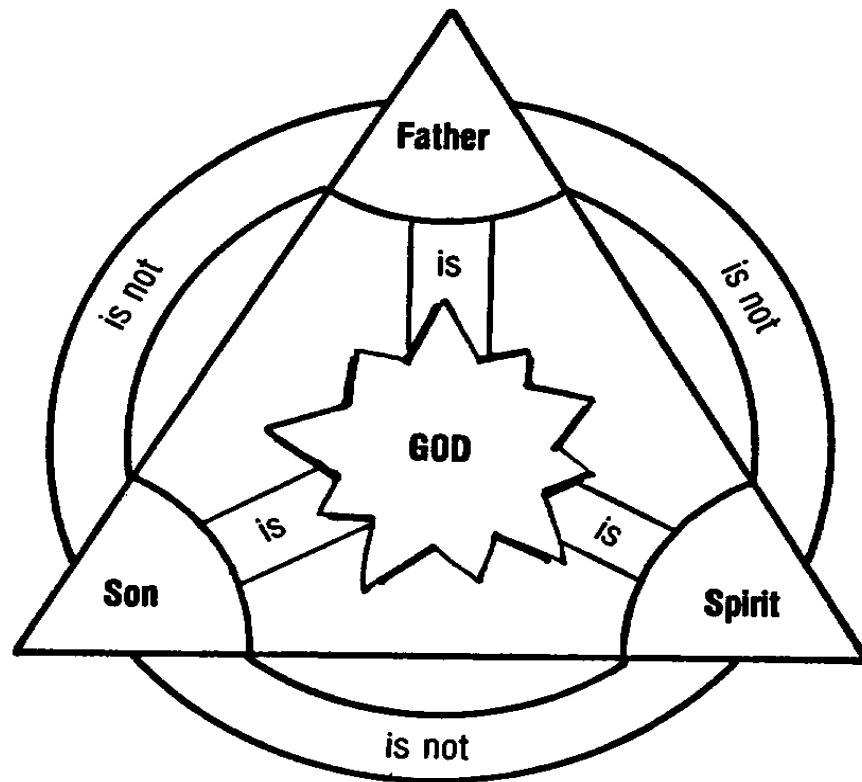


## Ancient Diagram of the Holy Trinity



### *Biblical Support for the Trinity*

#### **Old Testament Teaching:**

While there is no explicit statement in the Old Testament affirming the Triunity, we can confidently say that the Old Testament not only allows for the Triunity, but also implies that God is a triune Being in a number of ways:

(1) The name *Elohim*, translated *God*, is the plural form of *El*. While this is what is called a plural of plenitude pointing to the power and majesty of God, it certainly allows for the New Testament revelation of the Triunity of God.

(2) There are many instances where God uses the plural pronoun to describe Himself (see Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8).

(3) In the creation account, both God the Father and the Holy Spirit are seen in the work of creation. It is stated that God created heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1), but that it was the Holy Spirit who moved over the earth to infuse it with life in the sense of protecting and participating in the work of creation (Gen. 1:2).

(4) Writing about the Messiah, Isaiah reveals Him to be equal with God, calling Him the "Mighty God" and "Eternal Father" (Isa. 9:6).

(5) Several passages reveal a distinction of persons within the Godhead. (a) In Psalm 110:1, David demonstrates there is a distinction of persons between "LORD," the one speaking, and the one addressed called by David, "my Lord." David was indicating the Messiah was no ordinary king, but his own Lord, *Adoni* (my Lord), one who was God Himself. So God the first person addresses God the second person. This is precisely Peter's point when He quotes this Psalm to show the resurrection of the Messiah was anticipated in the Old Testament. (b) The Redeemer (who must be divine, Isa. 7:14; 9:6) is distinguished from the Lord (Isa. 59:20). (c) The Lord is distinguished from the Lord in Hosea 1:6-7. (d) The Spirit is distinguished from the Lord in a number of passages (Isa. 48:16; 59:21; 63:9-10).

(6) In the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, God made it clear that the one who would be born of the virgin would also be Immanuel, God with us.

(7) Two other passages which imply the Trinity are Isaiah 48:16 and 61:1. Here all three persons are mentioned and yet seen as distinct from each other. See also Gen. 22:15-16.

#### **New Testament:**

The case for the Triunity of God is even stronger in the New Testament. Here it can be unequivocally demonstrated the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Furthermore, the New Testament teaches us that these three names are not synonymous, but speak of three distinct and equal persons.

(1) *The Father is called God* (John 6:27; 1 Pet. 1:2).

(2) *Jesus Christ, the Son is declared to be God.* His deity is proven by the divine names given to Him, by His works that only God could do (upholding all things, Col. 1:17; creation, Col. 1:16; John 1:3; and future judgment, John 5:27), by His divine attributes (eternality, John 17:5; omnipresence, Matt. 28:20; omnipotence, Heb. 1:3; omniscience, Matt. 9:4), and by explicit statements declaring His deity (John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8).

(3) *The Holy Spirit is recognized as God.* He is called God in Acts 5:3-4, He has the attributes which only God can possess, like omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10) and omnipresence (1 Cor. 6:19), and He regenerates people to new life (John 3:5-6, 8; Tit. 3:5) which must of necessity be a work of God for only God has the power of life. Finally, His deity is evident by the divine names used for the Spirit as “the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

#### ***Errors to Avoid Concerning the Trinity***

***Tri-theism.*** This is the teaching that there are three Gods who are sometimes related, but only in a loose association. Such an approach abandons the biblical oneness of God and the unity within the Trinity.

***Sabellianism or Modalism.*** Sabellius (A.D. 200), the originator of this viewpoint, spoke of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but he understood all three as no more than three manifestations of one God. This teaching came to be known as *modalism* because it views one God who variously manifests Himself in three modes of existence: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

***Arianism.*** This doctrine had its roots in Tertullian, who made the Son subordinate to the Father. Origen took this further by teaching that the Son was subordinate to the Father “in respect to essence.” The result was ultimately Arianism which denied the deity of Christ. Arius taught that only God was the uncreated One; because Christ was begotten of the Father it meant Christ was created by the Father. Arius believed there was a time when Christ did not exist. Arius and his teaching was condemned at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325.