



Martin Luther
(1483-1546)

This Christian knowledge of God is brought to us and is wrought in us not by God's self-revelation in nature, history, and man's conscience, but solely by God's self-revelation in His Word.

For in Holy Scripture, which is God's Word, God speaks to us and with us and there reveals His innermost being and His loving heart. The natural knowledge of God, as Luther says enables us to know God, as it were, from without, from His works, just as we learn something of the character of the builder from the quality of the house he builds.

Holy Scripture, however, which is God's Word to man, gives us the Christian knowledge of God; it reveals God's inner being, the gracious purposes in the mind of God, just as one man reveals his true nature, his feelings, and the thoughts of his heart to another by his spoken words. Modern theology attempts to erase this vast difference between the natural and the Christian knowledge of God. And this difference would indeed disappear if the Bible were no more than the record of human concepts of God as they were developed under Jewish and Christian influence. But, thank God! this Modernist claim is entirely groundless.

Introduction:

Revealed or Christian Knowledge of God:

- ⑥ Because human beings are constantly looking in the wrong places and listening to the wrong voices, God must speak clearly if sinners are to hear him, know him and believe. Revealed Knowledge isn't extra knowledge so we can make sense of the natural knowledge, revealed knowledge is the only way to truly know God and be saved. Revealed knowledge is God speaking to us with His words in order to reveal who He is and create saving faith in Jesus.
 - ✠ **John 20:30-31**
 - ✠ **1 John 5:13**
- ⑥ *We know concerning the **essence** of God nothing more, and nothing more specific, than what the Holy Scriptures teach. We acquire, indeed, from this source no adequate and complete knowledge of the essence of God; for this **transcends our powers of comprehension**, and for this reason the Scriptures declare the incomprehensibility of the divine essence. But we may very well be content with the knowledge imparted to us through the Holy Scriptures, as we nevertheless learn therefrom as much about God and his essence as is **needful for our salvation** (Schmid, p.120-121).*
 - ✠ **1 Timothy 6:16**
 - ✠ **1 John 3:2**
 - ✠ **Romans 11:33**
- ⑥ *The Christian knowledge of God, which is derived from God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, is **Trinitarian**; in other words: the Christian knows that the **one true God** is Father and Son and Holy Ghost. Luther's thesis is correct: "The Holy Scriptures teach that God is **absolutely one and that He is also three persons**, absolutely distinct (Pieper, p.376).*

QUESTION: Is the Doctrine of the Trinity Biblical?

- ⑥ The word **Trinity** is not in the Bible, and there is no book in the Bible that explicitly addresses the Trinity.
- ⑥ We establish Christian doctrine by putting together the various teachings of Scripture into a coherent whole. We look at all of God's revelation in Scripture in both the Old and the New Testaments in order to answer questions about God.
- ⑥ **Three truths** we must demonstrate that are Biblical in order for the doctrine of the Trinity to be proven as a Biblical doctrine.
 - **I. There Is One God**
 - **II. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all God/Divine**
 - **III. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not identical with one another.**

I. There Is One God

- ⑥ First, Holy Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, teaches that God is *one* (monotheism). The entire Scriptures may fittingly be called a mighty protest against polytheism. In the Old Testament the gods of the heathen are called non-gods (לֹא אֱלֹהִים, Jer. 2:11), nonentities, vanities without existence (אֱלִילִים, Lev. 19:4; 26:1); and in the New Testament "nothing" (1 Cor. 8:4), "vanities" (Acts 14:15). They can neither harm nor help man, because there is no breath in them (לֹא רוּחַ בָּם), and they are a vanity, a dream (הַבִּלְהֻמָּה) (Jer. 10:5, 14–15). Scripture therefore demands of man a monotheistic worship. Ex. 20:3.
 - ✠ **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – שְׁמַע – Shema – hear – Basic confession of faith and the oldest, fixed prayer in Judaism. For thousands of years every evening and morning Jewish people have prayed these words.
 - ✠ **1 Corinthians 8:4; Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 1 Timothy 2:5**



Philip Melancthon
(1497-1560)

Now, although all the minds of men and of angels stand in wonderment in admiration of this mystery, that God has begotten a Son and that the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, proceeds from the Father and the Son, yet we must concur in this, because, as has already been said so many times, we must believe concerning God as He has revealed Himself. The heathen wander about in their hearts seeking a god according to their own speculations; but the church knows the eternal and almighty God, our Creator, as He has revealed Himself. Although we cannot probe this mystery to the depths, yet in this life God has willed that there be at least a beginning of knowledge of this subject and that our worship be distinguished from the worship of false gods. He has given in His Word a revelation by sure testimonies. In this Word, like a fetus who draws nourishment in the womb of the mother through the umbilical cord and the organs of reproduction, we sit enclosed, drawing our knowledge of God and of life from the Word of God, so that we may worship Him as He has revealed Himself.

I. There Is One God (cont.)

- ⑥ We see this in the beginning - Genesis – one God speaking and creating.
- ⑥ The 10 Commandments – God is not just the greatest of those gods – but the OT assumes the inexistence of the other “gods.”
 - ✠ **Jer 2:11; 1 Cor 8:4**
- ⑥ In the OT the way God reveals Himself is progressive from OT to NT – not that God changes His revelation, but that God progressively reveals more and more about Himself and His plan of salvation/redemption as the Scriptural narrative moves forward.
- ⑥ Not as many explicit texts about one God in early OT books as say Isaiah and the latter prophets – clarity as revelation progresses.
- ⑥ Isaiah is a good place to go if you are dealing with **Mormonism** and multiple gods (*see notes*).
 - ✠ **Isaiah 43:10-11**
 - ✠ **1 Timothy 2:5**
 - ✠ **Gal 3:20**
 - ✠ **Rom 3:30**

II. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all God/Divine

God the Father

- ✠ **Matt 6**
 - ✠ **Rom 8:15**
 - ✠ **Isaiah 63:16; 64:8**
 - ✠ **Deut 32:6**
 - ⑥ The controversy isn't usually centered on the Father as God. Consistent theme throughout OT and NT – not really as big of an issue as the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- #### God the Son
- ⑥ homoousios, in Christianity, *the key term of the Christological doctrine formulated at the first ecumenical council, held at Nicaea in 325, to affirm that God the Son and God the Father are of the same substance.* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/homoousios>
 - ✠ **1 Cor 8:5-6**
 - ⑥ Paul is working within the Jewish framework of the Shema (Deut 6:4 – Hear, O Israel the Lord our God is One). He expands this and place the identity of God in the Father and the identity of Lord our God in Jesus. Consistent in Paul's theology – Paul uses the term God he usually is referring to the Father and when he uses the term Lord he is usually referring to Jesus. In the Shema God is both God and Lord. Exceptions – **Titus 2 example**.
 - ⑥ God and Lord is a Divine title/identity, and both the Father and Son are placed within this identity not just the Father.
 - ⑥ **The Gospel of John**
 - ✠ **John 1**
 - **INTERESTING FACT** - New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses - No definite article in front of God doesn't mean “a god.” *The primary function of the article is not to make a word definite. This is one of the reasons why the Jehovah's Witnesses' understanding of John 1:1 is wrong.* θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος means, “the Word was God,” not “a god,” even though the article does not occur before θεός (Mounce, p. 409).

God the Son (cont.)

† **John 20:28** - Thomas confession of faith – “*My Lord and my God.*”

† **John 8:58** – I am – taking the Divine name – New World translation translates it as “I have been.”
Attempt to hide what the text says – they just have to trust what the Watchtower Society tells them – who know where they get their “theology.”

† **John 10:29**

- ⑥ Divine works are attributed to Jesus. Jesus accepts worship – angels don’t – Joh in Revelation is rebuked for falling down in front of an angel. Jesus doesn’t stop those who worship Him. The Angel of the Lord in the OT.

The Holy Spirit

- ⑥ In Genesis He is the Spirit of God – ruach – often in prophetic contexts. Identified with God – Divine attributes and titles – things only attributed to God. The Spirit has personhood. Does Divine works.

† Acts 5:3-4

† Psalm 139:7

† 1 Cor 2:10

† Heb 9:14

† Luke 1:35

- ⑥ Not just a force of God, has a mind, searches hearts. This is personhood language. Calling the Spirit “it” is a Trinitarian error.

† **1 Cor 2:10; 12:11; Rom 8:27; Luke 12:12; Rom 8:14; John 16:17; Acts 13:2; 1 Cor 12; John 16:8**

- ⑥ Scripture makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is a person and not some impersonal force.

III. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not identical with one another.

- ⑥ They are not parts of God – not one third each – all fully God. Analogies lead to thinking of the persons as only a part of God – why they are bad. The full reality of what it means to be an egg doesn’t exist in the shell – but the full reality of what it means to be God exists in all three persons. The Divine Essence is fully present in each person. Fully share in the Divine essence. Not Identical. The Father doesn’t change into the Son, etc. The names of the Father Son and Holy Spirit are all put together in a Divine context.
- ⑥ Trinitarian phrases - The most famous – baptismal formula – singular name – three separate persons
 - † **Matt 28:19**
 - † **2 Cor 13:14**
 - † **1 Cor 12:4-4 – blessing from all three with the Divine identity.**
 - † **Eph 4:4-6**
- ⑥ Interaction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not just God taking on different forms. Baptism of Jesus is a prime example.
 - † **Matt 3:16-17** - Active at the same time – interacting with each other.
 - † **Genesis 1** – all three together – Spirit is tied to creation then and in our baptism into a new creation. Distinct picture throughout Scripture.
 - † **Psalm 110** – Distinction between Father and Son
 - † **John 5:32-37 6:44; 14:16: 15:26** – Jesus continues to distinguish Himself from the Father and the Spirit.
 - † **John 17** - The Son speaking/praying to the Father.