

God's Triune Existence

Implications of God's Trinity

We have advanced the idea that God is a triune personal being, a being with three distinct persons sharing a single divine nature. The triunity of God is not a conclusion predicated on what we see occurring naturally. Human beings are unities, not triunities. However, based on a reading of Scripture, the triunity of God is the only logical conclusion to which we can come. We who accept the teaching of God's Word can be neither monotheists nor tri-theists and remain consistent with what Scripture teaches. Only a Trinitarian view will work.

Having concluded that God is Triune in the sense that three distinct persons are sharing one divine nature, there are certain implications that seem apparent. One has to do with what is true because they share the same nature. The other has to do with what is true because they are distinct persons.

First, since these three persons share one divine nature, what should we expect regarding the attributes and abilities that are derived from that nature? We should expect that what we find true of one person in the Godhead is true of the other two as well. The three persons equally share the one nature. There is nothing in Scripture that suggests otherwise. One member does not derive a particular characteristic or attribute from the divine nature that is unique to that person. Neither person is superior or deficient in any way. If an attribute or ability is true for one person, it is true for all three persons. Thus, we would say, as have many before us, that the three persons are co-equal. Furthermore, if we conclude that God exists from eternity (as we do), then we can also conclude that the three persons are also co-eternal.

Second, regarding the activities of the three persons, since they are distinct, the persons may act independently of each other even though they may act cooperatively. The fact that one person takes a particular action does not mean that the other two must as well. They are distinct persons who can make their own determinations and carry them out. This means, for example, that the three persons can hold a conversation or that each may direct his attention to one person as opposed to the other.

That the three persons may act independently also indicates that the experiences of the three persons are not the same. Thus, any person may take an action and thus experience something that the other two did not experience. We know this is true in the case of the Incarnation. Only the

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Son has experienced humanity even though the Father and Spirit completely understand what it means to be human. These differences in experience might lead us to consider that the three persons of the Godhead are recognizably different, perhaps, for example, in personality. We know, for example, that one person in the Godhead, the Son, is distinctively known as "the Word" (John 1:1).