

The Trinity Affirmed

By James Moriello, Pastor, Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI

In Christianity today, as with any age, there is the revival of ancient heresies, or false teachings. One of the charges to the minister is to be “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:9). This is often not done out of fear or laziness, and many people are unable to grow in the faith for lack of a firm doctrinal foundation. Many Pentecostals (Oneness Pentecostals, United Pentecostals, and ‘Jesus Only’ Pentecostals) deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is against this heresy that I respond by affirming biblical truth. Their teaching is a modern resurgence of the ancient heresy of Sabellianism, named for the third century false teacher Sabellius, who taught that God reveals Himself in three different forms but denies that each Person of the Trinity exists at the same time. This heresy is also known as modalism. We will note three lines of evidence affirming the One Triune God in response.

- 1) God is referred to in the plural throughout the Bible, beginning with Genesis 1:1 (Elohim). Adonai, the Hebrew word translated Lord, is always found in the plural. In Genesis 20:13, we find the plural verb used when God is the subject. The Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4, literally reads in the Hebrew: “YHWH, our Gods, is one”. Further, we have distinct personalities in the divine counsel. God says: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Other examples of plural pronouns can be found in Genesis 3:22, 11:7, and Isaiah 6:8.
- 2) All Three Persons of the Godhead are eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent: (references in that order) God the Father (Psalm 90:2, 1 Peter 1:5, Jeremiah 17:10, Jeremiah 23:24), God the Son (John 1:1, Hebrews 1:3, John 16:30, Matthew 28:20), God the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14, Romans 15:19, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Psalm 139:7-10). Only God can have these attributes, so all must be God.
- 3) All Three Persons are mentioned in the same verse as being present at the same time on several occasions in Scripture. “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me” (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18). Here we have the God the Holy Spirit working with God the Son, having been commissioned to do so by God the Father. At Jesus’ baptism, “He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:16-17). Here we have God the Holy Spirit descending upon God the Son and God the Father speaking. Other Scriptures which affirm the Three Persons of the Godhead are Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 28:19, and John 14:16-17.