

The Trinitarian Dilemma

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The issue is simple here. The Bible plainly teaches over and over again that God is one: Deuteronomy 6; Isaiah 44:24; 45:6; 47:8-10; Jesus in Matthew 22:35–40, Mark 12:28–34; etc. Jesus' deity is also clearly stated and presented both explicitly (expressly stated/expounded) and implicitly (demonstrated by his unique actions and abilities).

Regarding the classical definition of the doctrine of the Trinity: “There is one God externally existent in three co-equal persons, Father, Son and Spirit. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.” This whole statement is not encapsulated in any *biblical* teaching.

We can break this down further into Trinitarianism part A and part B. The first statement in the above definition is often taught by Trinitarians by itself. Then, the biblical evidence offered only covers this statement: “There is one God, eternally existing, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” This is a “Oneness” statement. More accurately, it is a biblical statement. So, Trinitarians will commonly state their view, prove Oneness biblically, and then assume the rest “eternally existing in three persons” and “each divine Person is not the other divine Person.”

Eclectic evidence will be accumulated to support these two parts of the theory, but no direct biblical teaching or statement is anywhere to be found. Plain, clear biblical statements and teachings (teachings can be discourses, demonstrations through storytelling or actions, or even themes of whole sections or books), this is what is needed for us to qualify something as truly “biblical.” Gathering biblical statements to formulate an eclectic doctrine does not equal biblical doctrine. It might be that an eclectic, gathering-of-facts doctrine might

also be biblical, if indeed it is stated or taught elsewhere. However, this is not always the case. This eclectic, “Bible-based” approach is often wrong and is how many heresies/departures from truth are supported, e.g. Judaizers, Arianism, anti-Semitism, etc. The point here is that just because the Bible is used to support an idea, it does not follow that the idea is true. On the contrary, truly biblical ideas are always true, and we must submit to them.

Trinitarianism is not the latter but the former. It is not a biblical doctrine but merely a bible-based doctrine. Therefore, it could be wrong, and no one should ever be forced or required to bow to it in submission unless it can be demonstrated to be wholly biblical and not merely Bible-based. Then, if the Bible-based doctrine contradicts any part of truly biblical teaching or any biblical statement, then it is most surely false and needs to be either thrown out or revised to accord and align with biblical revelation. If a Bible-based teaching does not cohere to or converge with biblical revelation, then it is likely to be false in some aspect. If it contradicts in any way, then it is assuredly false.

So then, a clear and deliberate articulation of the Trinitarian doctrine, such as we see in the Athanasian Creed of the 7th century, is what would be needed to occur somewhere in Scripture in order to make that doctrine authoritative and true divinely inspired orthodoxy. Perhaps even a parable in which God is depicted as a three-person committee in deliberation or by a parallel of three “whos” together equaling one “something,” something metaphorical like this could also qualify as biblical teaching. Still, there is nothing like either of these, not anything explicitly stated, nor anything implicitly taught or illustrated. Note that nothing extra-biblical can qualify as biblical.

So, such a statement or teaching, even in the form of exposition, must be found somewhere in the pages of Scripture. However, it is utterly absent, and this is the first of the major Trinitarian dilemmas and shortcomings, namely, that the doctrine is not truly biblical. It is not anywhere taught or explained by Jesus, the apostles, nor by any prophet, Moses, David, not anywhere and not by anyone, not

until post-biblical times. This is the second major Trinitarian dilemma. It is extra-biblical “revelation” in the truest sense of the phrase. Therefore, to classify it on the same level as scriptural proclamations and teachings is to exalt post-biblical ideations and writings to the same level of God’s inspired Scriptures.