

CORE TENETS OF THE TRINITY

GOD IS ONE. HE IS THE ONE AND ONLY GOD.



TRITHEISM
There are three separate deities.

The LORD (is) our God, the LORD is one! **Deut 6:4**
I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. **Isa 45:5**
We know ... *there is no other God but one.* **1 Cor 8:4**
You believe that there is one God. You do well. **Jas 2:19**
I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself. **Isa 44:24**

EACH PERSON OF THE THREE IS FULLY DIVINE, THUS COEQUAL AND COETERNAL.



ADOPTIONISM
God adopts the man Jesus as His son at his baptism.



ARIANISM
The Son was created.



SEMI-ARIANISM
The Son came forth from the Father, is "of similar substance" (but not equal) with Him and hence subordinate.



SUBORDINATIONISM
The Son is subordinate to the Father *by nature*.

THE FATHER IS GOD*
And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. **John 17:3**
My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? **Matt 27:46**

THE SON IS GOD*
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **John 1:1 cf. 1:14**
Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. **Gen 19:24**
Angel of the LORD = God = LORD. **Gen 16:7-13; Exod 3:2-6; Judg 13:17-23**
Unto us a Son is given ... And His name will be called ... Mighty God, Everlasting Father ... **Isa 9:6**
My Lord and my God! **John 20:28**
... our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. **Titus 2:13**
This is the true God and eternal life. **1 John 5:20**
Before Abraham was, I AM. **John 8:58 cf. Exod 3:14**
... who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. **Phil 2:6**
For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. **Col 2:9**
I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. **Rev 22:13 cf. 1:8; 21:6 & Isa 44:6; 48:12**

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD*
Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... You have not lied to men but to God. **Acts 5:3-4**
... the eternal Spirit ... **Heb 9:14**
The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet ... **Acts 28:25-26 cf. Isa 6,8-10** (speaker is the LORD/Lord)

THE SON OF GOD
"Son" is a metaphor, it does not denote biological descent (e.g., **1 Kgs 20:35; Neh 12:28-29**).
"Son of God" means: same nature as the Father, but distinct from Him; in eternal, loving relationship with Him; representing the Godhead to creatures, eventually becoming man, and as such living in dependence upon the Father.

UNIQUE (IN KIND)
Jesus is "unique in kind" *monogenēs* (**John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9**). This denotes his unique personhood, his relationship to the Father, and his mission (cf. Isaac as Abraham's "only son" of promise in **Heb 11:17** NRSV).
monogenēs comes from *monos* "only, alone" and *genos* "kind," not *gennaō* "beget, give birth to."
The translation "only begotten son" is misleading. It goes back to the Latin Vulgate, which wanted to make clear that Jesus is not a created being. The King James Version derived the reading "only begotten" from the Vulgate.

FIRSTBORN
Title for the Messiah and Davidic King (**Ps 89:27[28]**); preeminence, not chronological order: "the firstborn from the dead" (**Col 1:18 cf. Matt 17:3**); preeminence over all creation (**Col 1:15**).

SUBMISSION OF THE SON
It is a voluntary functional submission of Jesus which embraces the time of his incarnation and the redemptive process (**Matt 24:36; John 4:34; 5:19, 30; 10:17-18; 14:28; 1 Cor 15:28**). Before and after His incarnation, Jesus is glorified with His Father (**John 5:23; 17:5; Phil 2:6, 9-11**).



GOD IS THREE. HE IS THE TRIUNE GOD, A TRINITY OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Matt 28:19**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **2 Cor 13:14**

... elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ... **1 Pet 1:2**

THE THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY ARE DISTINCT FROM ONE ANOTHER.

And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." **Luke 3:22**

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him. **Matt 12:32**

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, ... He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak ... He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. **John 14:16-17; 16:13-14**

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits ..., and from Jesus Christ ... **Rev 1:4-5**

All Scripture quotations are taken from the NKJV.



TRITHEISM
There are three separate deities.



MODALISM/SABELLIANISM
One God manifests himself in three modes. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are identical in person.



PATRIPASSIANISM
Jesus is God the Father who is incarnated and suffers as the Son.

View excluded by the adjacent core tenet.

EVER CLEARER STATEMENTS FROM ELLEN G. WHITE

Christ and the Father are both "persons," with Christ having "a form like" the Father. "Said Jesus, 'I am in the express *image* of My Father's *person*.'" **EW 54, 77**

Christ "possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God." **2T 200**

"Christ [...] was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose" and "one in power and authority with the Father." **GC 493, 495**

The Holy Spirit "personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality." **20MR 324**

The Holy Spirit is "the Third Person of the Godhead." **Letter 8, 1896; SpTA10 25, 37; DA 671**
Jesus is "the only true God." **Ms 25, 1896**

"In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, undervied." **DA 530**

"The three highest powers of heaven [...] Three distinct agencies" **Ms 27a, 1900** and "the three great personal dignitaries of heaven." **Ms 92, 1901**

"There are three living persons of the heavenly trio." **SpTB07 63; Ms 21, 1906**

"The Holy Spirit is a person," "has a personality," and "must also be a divine person." **Ms 20, 1906; Ev 617**

Statement of Faith, no. 2: "Godhead, or Trinity" (*Adventist Yearbook*)

Endorsement: First official vote on the fundamental beliefs by the GC

DEVELOPMENT IN ADVENTIST HISTORY



Predominantly non-Trinitarian views (until 1888)

General Conference: New focus on redemption elevates view of Christ's nature

Increasingly Trinitarian view (1888-1898)

Publication of "Desire of Ages"

Paradigm shift (1898-1913)

First formulation of the Trinitarian belief (F. M. Wilcox in *RH* Oct 9, 1913)

Consolidation of the doctrine of the Trinity (from 1913)



PRESENT