



Apologetics Wednesdays

LESSON 5 – THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

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Spring 2022

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DEFENDING YOUR FAITH – OUTLINE OF LESSONS

Apologetics Wednesdays with Noel R. Vincent			
<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Issues & Questions Addressed</i>
1	23-Mar	Theodicy: The Problem of Evil Part I	Did God create evil?
			Understanding the Skeptic's #1 Argument
			Why does God allow evil?
2	30-Mar	Theodicy: The Problem of Evil Part II	Can any good come from pain and suffering?
			Why do bad things happen to good people?
			Why do we suffer for Adam's sin?
3	06-Apr	Doctrine of Hell & Eternal Punishment	What exactly is hell: Divine Principle or Brutal Reality?
			Can a good God really punish people forever?
			What about people who have never heard the Gospel?
4	13-Apr	Arguing for God's Existence	Big Bang Cosmology: Why does anything exist at all?
			C. S. Lewis's Moral Argument
			Intelligent Design: Theory or Evidence of a Divine Creator?
5	20-Apr	Doctrine of the Trinity	Can anyone really understand trinitarianism?
			Defending the Triune Godhead
			Defeating False Gods
6	27-Apr	The Real Jesus: Historicity, Nature, & Existence	Hypostasis: Understanding the God-Man
			Refuting False Resurrection Hypotheses
			Do credible, non-biblical, historical accounts of Jesus exist?

Lesson 5: The Doctrine of the Trinity

Introduction: Welcome everyone. Thank you for joining us for this 5th session of Defending Your Faith. Tonight we will be delving into what some consider to be the greatest mystery of Christianity, that is, Trinitarianism, or the Doctrine of the Trinity. No doubt you've been told that the trinity is something we simply take on faith, as Christians, because the human mind can't conceive of it, much less understand it. Nonsense. We CAN conceive of and understand this critical doctrine. Trinitarianism is merely the summation of the Bible's teaching on the ontology (nature of existence) of the Triune Godhead. The Doctrine of the Trinity states that God is one in essence and three in persons – a godhead.

Session 5.1 – The Ontology of the Triune Godhead

A. The Unified Cooperative Godhead:

1. **Introduction** – Everything we know about the Godhead comes from Scripture. The tri-unity of God's ontological existence (His essence; spiritual substance) finds its first biblical introduction in Genesis. Here, and in numerous other passages of OT/NT Scripture regarding the various works of God, we see that the Godhead is a dynamic, self-giving, community of persons that cooperates in unity.
2. **The Act of Creation – (Gen 1:1-3)** *"1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ["God" = the trinity – now, here's who did what] 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God [3rd Person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit] was moving over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, [1st Person of the Trinity – the Father who "said"] "Let there be light"; and there was light."* [2nd Person of the Trinity – the Son, the Word spoken].
 - a. The triune godhead first appears here in Scripture. The word, "God" (vs. 1), has the trinity in view, as the creation event was a cooperative work of each person of the godhead in unity.

- b. The "*Spirit of God*" (vs. 2) was the godhead's power in "moving". God the Father (vs. 3) gave the command, "*said*," and the Son (vs. 3) was the spoken word that proceeded from the Father (logos = word), "*Let there be light*", that brought the creation into being.
- **(Matt 4:4)** *"But He answered and said, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every *word that [proceeds] out of the mouth of God.'"*
 - **(John 6:35)** *"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty."*
 - **(John 1:1-3)** *"In the beginning was the *Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being."*
 - **(Col 1:15-16)** *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."*

3. Imago Dei –

- a. **(Gen 1:26)** *"Then God [Father] said, "Let Us [Trinity] make mankind **in Our image**, according to Our likeness;"*
- b. **(Gen 3:22)** *"Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"*
- c. "Us ... Our ... Our" – This is not the royal "we", as is common among monarchs, who speak in the first-person plural to indicate themselves + their monarchy, court, or realm. Rather, this is the triune godhead speaking as one. The hermeneutical key is found in Gen 3:22 where "one of Us" refers, not to Adam but, to **One** of the three Persons of the Trinity – **one of Us**.
- d. **"In Our image"** does not mean we were made in God's physical image, but rather in His spiritual image. God is not physical, but spiritual (John 4:24).

- God made man with the capacity for a relationship with Himself, who is the supreme spiritual being. He gave us an intellectual and emotional psyche above the animals such that we might apprehend and interact with God. For example, unlike the animal kingdom, we humans have not only thoughts, desires, and emotions, but have thoughts, desires, and emotions about our thoughts, desires, and emotions. We are capable of abstract thought, beliefs, and faith. We can relate to God.
- Man is a *complex* triune being (body, soul, and spirit). God is a *simple* triune being. God the father - soul (commander - mind, will and emotions), Christ the Son - body (the only physical manifestation of God as Person), Holy Spirit – spirit (power and life). 1Th 5:23, Heb 4:12, Matt 28:19, Gal 4:6

4. The Act of Salvation:

- a. **(Eph 1:3-6)** *“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in the Beloved [Jesus].*
- b. **(Eph 1:7-12)** *“7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our wrongdoings, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He set forth in Him, 10 regarding His plan of the fullness of the times, to bring all things together in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. 11 In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in the Christ would be to the praise of His glory.”*

c. **(Eph 1:13-14)** *“13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed [regenerated and indwelt] in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise, 14 who is a first installment of our inheritance, in regard to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

5. **Personal Interaction within the Godhead:** Exchanges and actions between the godhead are frequent in Scripture.

a. **(Luke 3:21-22)** *“... Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”*

b. **See Also:** Isa 6:8, 48:12-16, Ps 2:7, 45:7, 110:1, Matt 11:27, John 8:42, 17:24.

B. Shared Attribute of Deity

1. Poor Analogies:

- a. Complexity vs. Simplicity – Analogies such as triangles, eggs, or Snicker’s bars are poor representations/explanations for how God is one essence and three persons. They inevitably break down because the Trinity is not divisible into parts (complexity). God is ontologically simple.
- b. Modalism – Some try water as an analogy. H₂O can be a solid (ice), liquid (water), or gas (vapor). This also breaks down, because it represents a uni-personal God as manifesting Himself sometimes as Father (ice), sometimes as Son (water), and sometimes as Holy Spirit (vapor). This is the heresy of *modalism*.

2. Better Analogies: (none are perfect)

- a. Visual - Progressive Cones – It would be an improvement to consider three progressive cones. The 3rd protruding out of the 2nd, and the 2nd protruding out of the 1st. The 1st is God the Father. The 2nd is God the Son, who proceeds out of the Father. The 3rd is God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds out of the Son.
 - Scripture tells us that God the Father sent the Son (**1Jo 34:14**) *“We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”*;

- And that the Father and the Son sent the Spirit (**John 15:26**) *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.”*
 - b. Conceptual - Property Ownership – A husband and wife can jointly own their home. Under the laws of *joint tenancy*, each person owns an undivided interest in the whole property. They don't each own half. Three persons can possess a property. Deity (divine status; godness) is a property that God the Father, Son, and Spirit can each possess in full as an undivided interest in the whole.
 - **The Father Possesses Deity: (2Co 1:3)** *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.”*
 - **Jesus Possesses Deity: (Col 2:9)** *“For in [Christ] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”*
 - **The Holy Spirit Possesses Deity: (1Co 2:10-11)** *“10 ... for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.”*

Session 5.2 – The Biblical Case for the Triune Godhead

- A. **One is God – Only One God: (Isa 46:9)** *“... for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me.”*
- B. **God is One – Oneness of God: (one in essence)**
 - 1. **Jesus Taught God is One:**
 - a. **(Matt 23:9)** *“And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father-- the one in heaven.”*
 - b. **(Mark 10:18)** *“Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.”*
 - c. **(Mark 12:29)** *“Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’”*

- d. **(John 5:44)** *"How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?"*
- e. **(John 17:3)** *"And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

2. The Apostles Taught God is One:

- a. **(Rom 3:30)** *"since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith"*
- b. **(1 Cor 8:4-6)** *"4 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." 5 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth-- as in fact there are many gods and many lords-- 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."*
- c. **(Gal 3:20)** *"Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one."*
- d. **(Eph 4:6)** *"one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."*
- e. **(1 Tim 1:17)** *"To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."*
- f. **(1 Tim 2:5)** *"For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human."*
- g. **(James 2:19)** *"You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-- and shudder."*
- h. **(James 4:12)** *"There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?"*
- i. **(Jude 25)** *"to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."*

C. The Father is God:

1. Jesus' response when asked how to pray to God, **(Mt 6:9)** *"Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."*

2. **(John 6:27)** *“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”*
3. **(Gal 1:1)** *“Paul an apostle-- sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.”*

D. The Son is God:

1. **(John 8:58)** *“Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” He is quoting from Ex 3:14 as the Angel of the Lord and voice of the burning bush, who was God. The “I am” Jesus spoke was the Aramaic equivalent of the tetragrammaton (YHWH).*
2. **(John 5:23-24)** *“So that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*
3. **(John 10:30-33)** *“The Father and I are one.” 31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?” 33 The Jews answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.”*
4. **(John 20:28)** *“Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!””*

E. Christ is God:

1. **His Acts Reveal His Deity:** (Gospel Logic)
 - a. “Physical” Miracles –
 - Nature Miracles (calming seas, feeding 5000, fish in net): Christ as Lord over Creation.
 - Healing Miracles (blind, lame, and lepers): Christ as Lord over Man.
 - Resurrections (Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter): Christ as Lord over Life and Death.
 - b. “Spiritual” Miracles –
 - Acts of Judgment: Pharisees, the world, sinners. Judgment of this type (eternal, final) is miraculous in the sense that it can only be performed by God.

- Acts of Forgiveness: Jesus healed a paralytic, but pronounced his forgiveness first. **(Mark 9:3-12)** *“3 And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. 4 Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. 5 And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 ‘Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?’ 8 Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? 9 ‘Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’? 10 ‘But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—He said to the paralytic, 11 ‘I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.’ 12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this.’”*

c. He Accepts the Worship of God –

- **Legitimate since He is God – (John 20:28)** *“Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”*
- **Unlike the Angel – (Rev 22:8-9)** *“8 ...And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 And he said to me, ‘Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!’”*

2. **His Teaching Reveals His Deity:**

- a. Savior of the World – **(John 3:16)** *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.”*

- b. Eschatological King/Arbiter of Who Gets into God's Kingdom – (Matt 25:31-34) *"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*
- c. Relationship to Father and Spirit – (John 10:30) *"I and the Father are one."*
- d. Relationship to the Law of Moses – (Matt 5:17) *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."*
- e. Relationship to Religious Leaders and Sinners – Their judge. (Matt 23:33) *"You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"*

3. Reaction of the Jews to Revelation of His Deity:

- a. **(John 10:30)** *"I and the Father are one...we...stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."*
- b. **(Mark 2:7)** *"Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"*
- c. **(Matt 26:63-65)** *"But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy;"*

F. Holy Spirit is God

- 1. **Regeneration is by the Spirit: (Tit 3:5)** *"He saved us... by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."*

2. **Sanctification by the Spirit: (Gal 5:22-25)** – “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Ga 5:23 gentleness, self-control...”
3. **Jesus Taught by the Spirit: (Acts 1:2)** “until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.”
4. **Agabus Prophesied by the Spirit: (Acts 11:28)** “One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius.”
5. **Proxy for the Son (John 14:16, 26)** “16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”
6. **Law of the Spirit of Life Set Us Free: (Rom 8:2-4)** “2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”
7. **Lying to the Spirit is Lying to God– Ananias and Saphira killed by God for lying about the selling price of their property. (Acts 5:3-4)**
 “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!”

G. The Three are Distinct Persons

1. **(John 15:26)** “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.”
2. **(John 20:21-22)** “So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

3. **(Mt 3:16-17)** *“And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”*
4. **(1 Pet 1:2)** *“who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.”*
5. **(Mt 28:19)** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*
6. **(2Co 13:14)** *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”*
7. **(Eph 2:18)** *“for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.”*
8. **(Eph 4:4-6)** *“4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

Session 5.3 – The Necessity the Triune Godhead

A. The Divine Attribute: Love

1. **God is Love: (1Jo 4:7,16)** *“7 ...love is from God..., 16 ...God is love...”*
 What do these two verses have to do with the doctrine of the trinity?
 The mystery of the trinity is bound up in the nature of God, who is love.
2. **Three Propositions:**
 - a. T/F – God is the essence of all virtue, and all virtue proceeds from Him? **True!**
 - b. T/F – There is no virtue which God does not possess? **True!**
 - c. T/F – God possesses every virtue to the highest degree it may be possessed (else He is not God, and the One who does possess every virtue to the highest degree is actually God)? **True!**
3. **Three Questions:**
 - a. **What is the highest virtue?** Love (agape). **(1Co 13:13)** *“But now faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

- Storge – familial love across generations, with parents, etc.
 - Phileo – friendly affection, brotherly love.
 - Eros – erotic attraction, seeks to possess (literature, film).
 - Agape – unmerited choice, concern for welfare, godly compassion.
- b. **Is love a necessary attribute of God?** Could any god be gracious, merciful, forgiving, just, or creative without love?
- c. **Can just any concept of god possess it?** Prior to having created anything other than itself, how could any conceptual formulation of a god possess the attribute of love, experience love, or express love if that god were ontologically uni-personal (one in the nature of its being) rather than multi-personal (say, three in the nature of its being)? One is hard-pressed to conceive of a uni-personal god possessing love.

4. Resolutions:

- a. **The One True God (of the Bible) Exists in Community:** Before He created the heavenly host (angels), the universe, or human beings for fellowship, before anything else existed other than Himself, God existed ontologically (in His being) in the community of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Love is not only possible in a triune Godhead, but necessary in its closed community, where mutual adoration and harmony are paramount.
- b. **God Demands and Commands Love: (Mark 12:30-31)** *“30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”* In these two commands that sum up the whole law, all three forms of agape love are in view:
 - *“love ... yourself”.*
 - *“love your neighbor”.*
 - *“love the Lord your God ... love your neighbor as yourself”*
- c. **Forms of Agape Love:** unmerited choice, concern for welfare, godly compassion.

- Love of self. This is the basest form of love, which, for the wicked and unregenerate heart of fallen man, is merely the base instinct of self-preservation.
- Love of another person. This is a higher form of love, as one must give something of oneself to second person.
- Love of multiple persons in community. This is the highest form of love, as love must be sacrificially shared within the community.

B. Trinitarian Necessity:

1. The Nuclear Family:

- a. Beyond Self-Love – Love is expressed in a higher form when, for example, a man chooses a wife to whom he gives of himself, and whom he loves her more than himself. Without a second person in relationship, a form of love higher than self-love cannot be known, expressed, or experienced. While love of another is a higher form of love than self-love, love has not yet reached its pinnacle.
- b. The Pinnacle of Love – When a man and women come together in love, their love is incomplete. They long to produce a child from their love, someone with whom they may share their love, sacrificially. Now, love has reached its pinnacle: love of self, love of another, and shared sacrificial love of a third person in the context of a tripartite relationship.
- c. The Greatest Command – When God commanded love of Him, love of one’s neighbor (singular), and love of oneself, He was expressing love in its completed form: God, neighbor, self (3). Certainly, there will be more neighbors (plural) whom we are to love, but the law is summed up in the expression of love at its pinnacle of perfection (3). The addition of more children in a nuclear family does not attain to any higher form of love, who’s pinnacle was reached at three in relationship: Husband, wife, child (3).

2. The Efficient Frontier:

- a. **Uni-Personal vs. Multi-Personal:** Since any *conceptual formation of god* must include love as a primary attribute, a god must exist in *at least two persons*. There must be a community for love to exist and find its expression. Since *the one true God* (of the Bible) *is love*, and He pre-existed all creation, then He must necessarily exist ontologically in at least two persons.
- b. **Deific Pinnacle:** Since God possesses the highest virtue, love, in the highest form possible, then God must necessarily exist ontologically in three persons, in which love is at its deific pinnacle of perfection.
- c. **The Elegance of God:** God is elegant: *beauty marked by simplicity*. God is neither less than is necessary for His existence, nor more than is necessary for His existence.
 - For God to exist in one person, love would be precluded.
 - For God to exist in two persons, He would fall short of perfection.
 - For God to exist in more than three persons, His economy would be diminished.
 - For God to exist as four persons or a thousand persons would make Him no more perfect in the divine attribute of love, since He knows and experiences and expresses love to the fullest and highest degree in His triune existence.
 - More than three would be redundant, and less than three would be incomplete. God's ontological nature is such that He exists at the **efficient frontier** – three persons.

C. The Creative Impulse:

1. The Father Loves the Son:

- a. God's primary representation of Himself is as Father, and especially to God the Son. The perspective of Jesus was always as Son to the Father. In salvation - **(John 14:6)** "*...no one comes to the Father except through Me.*" In prayer - **(Matt 6:9)** "*Pray, then, in this way: Our Father, who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*"
- b. The NT epistle writers referred to God as "*God and Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*" (Rom 15:6, 1Pe 1:3, 1Co 1:3).

- c. God the Father loves God the Son. **(John 17:24)** - partial verse - *“Father, ...You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”*
What was God doing before the creation event? Loving His Son.

2. Love Creates:

- a. Everything God does He does as Father, including the creation. God the Father’s love for God the Son motivated Him to create. God’s love for the Son overflowed to the creation of man as a gift to the Son. **(John 17:24)** - complete verse - *“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”* God the Father created out of love for the Son.
- b. The whole of creation is the expression of God’s love. God created because He is love, and thus, desired to express His love both to His Son, and beyond the Godhead, by sharing Himself with Man, whom He created for fellowship with Himself, through the Son.

Conclusion: After a thorough study of the Doctrine of the Trinity, you should be able to understand Trinitarianism, defend it, and use it as an apologetic against false concepts of God, and in particular, against Islam. Islam denies the Trinity, and yet insists that its uni-personal god, Allah, is the one true god. Allah is not the God of Scripture; Allah is a false god that doesn’t pass the Trinity test. I encourage you to spend time with the notes, perhaps give the audio a second listen, and be “ready to give a defense to everyone who asks for the hope that lies within you.”