Trinitarian Objections Answered:

A Theological Defense of Christ's Divine Identity

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ABSTRACT

This paper responds to common objections raised against the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather than dismissing these challenges, it engages them directly with biblical, philosophical, and theological clarity. By drawing on classical Trinitarian doctrine, Christological formulations, and contemporary models such as the Integrated Hypostatic Union Model, this work seeks to demonstrate that objections like 'Who was Jesus praying to?' or 'How can God die?' rest on misunderstandings of orthodox Christian teaching. Each section offers a brief but rigorous answer to equip believers for evangelism and theological discussion.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Trinity is perhaps the most misunderstood doctrine in Christianity. It is often caricatured as illogical or self-contradictory, yet it stands as the only coherent framework capable of explaining the full testimony of Scripture regarding the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The goal of this paper is to respond to some of the most common objections to the Trinity—including those raised by skeptics, Unitarians, and Jewish interpreters—in a concise but meaningful way. Each question will be addressed theologically and logically, often referencing fuller models developed in prior works. This is not a comprehensive treatise, but a practical apologetic aid.

It is also worth addressing a common misunderstanding about simplicity. Critics sometimes invoke Occam's Razor—arguing that the Trinity is too complex and that the phrase "God is one" offers a simpler explanation. But Occam's Razor does not demand the most minimal idea—it seeks the simplest explanation that fully accounts for all the data. The Trinity, while conceptually rich, is the most coherent model that preserves biblical monotheism, explains the distinct persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and avoids the contradictions of modalism, subordinationism, or tritheism. In theology as in science, *simplicity* must not be confused with being *reductive*.

It is also important to note that the word "God" in Scripture often functions as an appellative rather than a proper name. That is, it serves as a title or role—similar to King, Father, or Judge—rather than identifying a specific person. In Hebrew, the term Elohim is not a personal name like YHWH, but a designation that can refer to the one true God, or in certain contexts, to angelic beings, disembodied spirits, and even false gods or demons. This distinction is vital in Trinitarian discussions, as many objections arise from

the mistaken assumption that "God" always and only refers to the Father. Recognizing the appellative nature of the term helps clarify how Jesus can be rightly called God without undermining monotheism or the distinction of persons within the Godhead.

Objection 1: If Jesus Is God, Who Was He Praying To?

One of the most frequent challenges to the Trinity is the question: "If Jesus is God, who is He praying to?" This objection assumes that either Jesus was talking to Himself—rendering the prayer absurd—or that there must be more than one God. Within orthodox Trinitarian theology, however, this question reflects a category error. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms one divine essence shared eternally by three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Son, the Divine Logos, took on a human nature (John 1:14), and in doing so, operated within the limitations of true humanity—including the need to pray. Prayer in this context is not a denial of divinity, but an expression of authentic human dependence. Christ's human will communicates with the divine Father, reflecting genuine relationship rather than ontological separation. This aligns with the model presented in the Integrated Hypostatic Union Model, which asserts that Christ's two natures—divine and human—exist in full integrity within a unified person. Thus, Jesus' prayers are not evidence against the Trinity, but a confirmation of the Incarnation's depth.

Objection 2: The Father Is Greater Than I – Does That Mean Jesus Is Not God?

Critics often point to John 14:28, where Jesus says, "The Father is greater than I," as evidence that He is not God. However, this interpretation fails to distinguish

¹ D. Gene Williams Jr., *The Integrated Hypostatic Union Model*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

between ontological equality and functional subordination. Trinitarian theology holds that the Son is equal in divine nature with the Father (homoousios), but distinct in role. The early church affirmed that the Son voluntarily submits to the Father in the economy of redemption. This submission is functional and temporal, not eternal or ontological. Within the Incarnation, Jesus, as fully human, obeys the Father's will, demonstrating humility and mission, not inferiority. This harmonizes with the Theological Unity Equation, which affirms that the persons of the Trinity can act in distinct roles without implying inequality of essence. The Son's submission does not compromise His deity; rather, it reveals the relational beauty of the Godhead and Christ's full identification with humanity.

Objection 3: If God Is All-Knowing, Why Did Jesus Say He Didn't Know the Hour?

In Mark 13:32, Jesus states, "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." This verse is frequently cited as proof that Jesus cannot be fully divine, since God is omniscient. However, this objection fails to account for the doctrine of the Incarnation and the dual nature of Christ. According to the Integrated Hypostatic Union Model (IHUM), Christ possesses both a divine and a human nature within one unified person. As divine, the Son is omniscient; as human, He experiences authentic limitations—including a voluntary restriction of certain divine prerogatives. This is consistent with the kenosis described in Philippians 2:6–8, where Jesus 'emptied Himself' not of divinity, but of the independent use of divine attributes. This self-limitation was part of His mission and did not imply a lack of divine

² D. Gene Williams Jr., *The Theological Unity Equation*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

identity. From a B-theory of time perspective, all moments are equally real and accessible to God, and Christ's selective disclosure of knowledge reflects His role in redemption, not a deficiency in divine nature.³

Objection 4: No One Has Seen God—But People Saw Jesus?

John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God," yet many people saw Jesus. This apparent contradiction dissolves when we understand the doctrine of divine invisibility and theophany. God, in His essence, is invisible and transcendent (1 Tim. 1:17). What people saw in Christ was not the divine essence per se, but the incarnate Logos—God made visible in human form. Jesus Himself says, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9), not because He is the Father, but because He perfectly reveals God in a visible and personal way. The Incarnation bridges the gap between divine transcendence and human perception.⁴

Objection 5: Isn't the Trinity Three Gods?

The doctrine of the Trinity is often misunderstood as tritheism—the belief in three separate gods. However, orthodox Christianity rejects this. The Trinity affirms that there is one divine essence (ousia) shared by three co-eternal, co-equal persons (hypostases). These persons are not parts or modes but fully possess the one undivided divine nature. Early creeds such as the Nicene and Athanasian clarified that the Father, Son, and Spirit

³ D. Gene Williams Jr., *B-Theory and Eternal Now*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

⁴ D. Gene Williams Jr., *Coherence of the Trinity in Jewish Text*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

are distinct in relation, not in substance.⁵ To call the Trinity three gods misunderstands the unity of being affirmed by Scripture and the early church.

Objection 6: Where Is the Word "Trinity" in the Bible?

It is true that the word *'Trinity'* does not appear in the Bible. But this is a category error. The term *'Trinity'* is a theological label developed to describe the truth revealed in Scripture. Just as the term *'incarnation'* or *'omnipresence'* synthesizes biblical teaching, so too does *'Trinity.'* The conceptual foundation is found throughout both Testaments—e.g., God sends God (John 1:1, 14; John 14:16), Jesus is worshiped (Rev. 5:13), and the Spirit speaks and acts personally (Acts 5:3–4). The absence of a label does not negate the reality it describes.⁶

Objection 7: Why Does Jesus Sit at the Right Hand of God?

This objection assumes that sitting at the right hand implies Jesus is less than God. However, in ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman context, the right hand of a king symbolized power, authority, and shared rule—not inferiority. Psalm 110:1, quoted frequently in the NT, affirms this. Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of the Father demonstrates His vindication, not His subordination in essence. It reflects the distinction between the Father and the Son, not inequality of nature.

Objection 8: Did Jesus Become God Later, or Was He Always God?

Some argue Jesus became God after His resurrection or exaltation. This view is called adoptionism and is a heresy rejected by the early church. Scripture affirms the

⁵ D. Gene Williams Jr., *Coherence of the Trinity in Jewish Text*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Preexistence of the Son (John 1:1; Col. 1:15–17). The Incarnation reveals—not creates—His divine identity. The 'becoming' language in Scripture refers to His role or mission, not His nature. For example, Philippians 2:9 says God 'highly exalted' Him, but only after He 'emptied Himself'—not because He lacked divinity, but because He took on humility.⁸

Objection 9: If Jesus Is Divine, Why Did He Call Himself the Son of Man? And Doesn't the Bible Say God Is Not a Man?

Some think that by calling Himself the "Son of Man," Jesus was denying divinity—but the opposite is true. In Daniel 7, the Son of Man is a heavenly figure who comes on the clouds of heaven, is given eternal authority, and is worshiped. This title points to both divine authority and messianic identity.⁹

Jesus used "Son of Man" to refer to Himself more than any other title. It emphasized His genuine humanity while subtly affirming His divine role. That's why, when He referenced Daniel 7 during His trial (Mark 14:62), the Sanhedrin charged Him with blasphemy—because they knew exactly what He was claiming.

But what about Numbers 23:19, which says "God is not a man"? That verse isn't denying the possibility of the Incarnation—it's contrasting God's perfect truthfulness with human inconsistency. It's saying God doesn't lie like people do.

In fact, the Old Testament shows God appearing in human form multiple times—as the Angel of the Lord or the Commander of the Lord's army. These moments, called

⁸ Williams, The Integrated Hypostatic Union Model.

⁹ D. Gene Williams Jr., *The Son of Man*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

theophanies, are not examples of God becoming human permanently, but they show that God can and does interact with the world in human-like form.

The doctrine of the Incarnation goes even further: it teaches that the eternal Son didn't stop being God—He took on full humanity. Not like a disguise, not half-and-half, but fully God and fully man in one person. Jesus is the God-man—both humble and exalted, Son of Man and Son of God.¹⁰

Objection 10: Isn't Calling Jesus "God" a Violation of Monotheism?

This objection misunderstands biblical monotheism. The Old Testament affirms one God, but also reveals divine plurality (e.g., Gen. 1:26; Isa. 48:16). In Second Temple Judaism, concepts like the 'Two Powers in Heaven' demonstrated that early Jews wrestled with the possibility of multiple persons within the Godhead. The NT builds on this—affirming the Son and Spirit as divine without contradicting monotheism. The Trinity is not a contradiction of monotheism, but its proper clarification in light of Christ's coming.¹¹

Objection 11: How Can God Die on the Cross?

God, in His divine nature, cannot die. However, in the person of Christ, the divine Son took on a human nature capable of suffering and death. What died on the cross was not the divine nature, but the human body and soul of Christ. This does not divide the person of Jesus—it confirms it. The IHUM model explains that Christ's unified

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ D. Gene Williams Jr., *Defense of the Trinity*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

personhood includes both natures fully. Death on the cross was a real human death, offered by the one person who is truly God and truly man.¹²

Objection 12: Why Doesn't the Spirit Speak of Himself?

In John 16:13, Jesus says the Spirit 'will not speak on His own authority.' Some misinterpret this as implying inferiority. But this reflects the Spirit's role in redemptive history: to glorify the Son and reveal the Father. Trinitarian persons often defer in function while remaining equal in essence. The Spirit is not silent—He speaks through prophets, apostles, and the church (Acts 13:2; Rev. 2:7). His mission is not self-promotion but glorification of Christ. This is not subordination in being, but coordination in mission.¹³

II. JEWISH OBJECTIONS TO THE TRINITY

Jewish Objection 1: Doesn't Deuteronomy 6:4 ('The Lord is One') Rule Out the Trinity?

One of the strongest objections raised by Jewish interpreters is rooted in the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). This statement is the cornerstone of Jewish monotheism, and for many, it appears to preclude any concept of a Triune God. However, the Hebrew word used for 'one'—echad—often implies a compound unity, not an absolute singularity. For example, Genesis 2:24 describes a husband and wife becoming 'one flesh' (basar echad), and in Exodus 26:6, multiple pieces of the tabernacle are joined together to form 'one' (*echad*) structure.

¹² Williams, The Integrated Hypostatic Union Model.

¹³ D. Gene Williams Jr., *Theological Unity Equation*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

This linguistic flexibility allows for the understanding that God can be one in essence while existing in a plurality of persons.

Moreover, the Bible contains numerous passages where God appears or speaks in ways that suggest plurality. Genesis 1:26 uses the phrase, 'Let us make man in our image,' a construction that has long puzzled interpreters. While some argue this is a majestic plural or divine address to the heavenly court, others—both Jewish and Christian—have seen in it a hint at divine complexity. The Angel of the Lord, as explored in earlier sections, is a prime example of this complexity: speaking as God, receiving worship, and yet being distinct from the Lord.

The Shema affirms the unity of God's essence (YHWH Eloheinu YHWH echad), but it does not define the nature of that unity in a way that excludes Trinitarian understanding. The Christian claim is not that there are three gods, but that within the one divine being exists three eternal persons. Far from violating Deuteronomy 6:4, the Trinity fulfills the depth and richness of what it means for God to be one.¹⁴

Jewish Objection 2: Isn't Worshiping Jesus Idolatry?

This objection arises from a misunderstanding of both the identity of Jesus and the boundaries of biblical worship. In Daniel 7, the 'Son of Man' receives worship and everlasting dominion—both of which belong to God alone. Jesus' use of this title at His trial (Mark 14:62) led to a charge of blasphemy, not because of political rebellion, but because He claimed a divine role. Additionally, in Revelation 5, Jesus is worshiped alongside God in heaven, in fulfillment of Old Testament worship texts (cf. Isa. 45:23). If

¹⁴ D. Gene Williams Jr., *Coherence of the Trinity in Jewish Text*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

Jesus were a mere creature, such worship would be idolatry—but if He is truly divine, as Christian theology holds, worshiping Him is not a violation of the Shema, but its proper fulfillment.¹⁵

Jewish Objection 3: Why Isn't the Trinity Taught Clearly in the Tanakh?

The doctrine of the Trinity is the result of progressive revelation. While not articulated in the same language as the New Testament, the Hebrew Bible contains embedded patterns of divine plurality. Examples include the plural language of Genesis 1:26, the Angel of the Lord, the personification of Wisdom, and the activity of the Spirit. Jewish mysticism, the Zohar, and the Targums also reflect these tensions. Rather than imposing a foreign idea, the Trinity arises as the fullest explanation for these complex portraits of God. The doctrine is not a later addition, but a theological unpacking of mysteries already present in the Jewish Scriptures. ¹⁶

Jewish Objection 4: Isn't the 'Son of Man' a Merely Human Title?

While the title 'Son of Man' (ben adam) in Ezekiel emphasizes human frailty, the figure in Daniel 7:13–14 is anything but ordinary. There, the 'Son of Man' comes with the clouds of heaven, is presented before the Ancient of Days, and receives dominion and worship. Second Temple literature, like 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra, interprets this figure as divine. Jesus strategically used this title for Himself, combining themes of humanity and

¹⁵ Williams, *The Son of Man*.

¹⁶ D. Gene Williams Jr., *The Ineffable Name*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

deity. At His trial, Jesus claimed this identity directly, leading to charges of blasphemy. ¹⁷ The 'Son of Man' is not a denial of divinity—it is a veiled affirmation. ¹⁸

Jewish Objection 5: Didn't the Rabbis Declare 'Two Powers in Heaven' a Heresy?

Yes—but only after the rise of Christianity. Alan Segal's research shows that early Jewish texts entertained the idea of multiple divine figures, often focusing on the Angel of the Lord or the exalted name. The doctrine of Two Powers was declared heretical because it began to be associated with Christian claims about Jesus. This shift was not theological clarity but polemical reaction. The very fact that such a belief was once tolerated—and even discussed among rabbis—demonstrates that Jewish monotheism has always had categories complex enough to include a multi-personal God. The Christian Trinity fits naturally into this pre-rabbinic framework.¹⁹

Jewish Objection 6: Was a Dying Messiah Part of Jewish Expectation?

Many Jewish critics argue that Jesus could not be the Messiah because He died—particularly by crucifixion. Yet some Jewish traditions before and during the Second Temple period did include the idea of a suffering or dying messiah. In certain sectarian texts from Qumran (e.g., 4Q285), we find a slain messianic figure. Later rabbinic literature even developed the concept of two messiahs: *Messiah ben Joseph*, who suffers or dies in battle, and *Messiah ben David*, who reigns. More importantly, key prophetic texts speak of a suffering servant who is rejected, pierced, and killed for the sins of others—especially Isaiah 53. Though some modern interpretations apply this to

¹⁸ Williams, The Son of Man.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹ Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 47–49; see also *Coherence of the Trinity*.

Israel collectively, earlier Jewish readings (e.g., Targum Jonathan) applied it to a messianic figure. Daniel 9:26 also states, 'the anointed one shall be cut off,' and Zechariah 12:10 describes God being 'pierced' yet mourned for as an only son. These texts collectively support the plausibility of a dying Messiah within Jewish expectation.²⁰ Jewish Objection 7: Did Jews See the 'Son of Man' on the Clouds as Divine?

Daniel 7:13–14 presents a 'Son of Man' coming with the clouds of heaven—a symbol of divine presence in the Hebrew Bible. This figure receives dominion, glory, and worship—elements reserved for God alone. While modern Jewish interpretation often explains this as symbolic of Israel or the saints, Second Temple Jewish texts viewed this figure as a preexistent, exalted being. In the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71), the 'Son of Man' is described as a heavenly redeemer who sits on God's throne and executes judgment. Likewise, 4 Ezra 13 describes a messianic figure who comes on the clouds and breathes fire upon God's enemies. These descriptions point to a belief in a messianic figure who is more than human—perhaps even divine. Jesus' identification with this figure, particularly at His trial (Mark 14:62), was understood by the Sanhedrin as a claim to divinity and led directly to the charge of blasphemy. Thus, the 'Son of Man' was not merely a human title; in Jewish apocalyptic thought, it was often interpreted as a divine figure.²¹

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²⁰ Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 53; see also 4Q285, Zech. 12:10, and Daniel 9:26.

²¹ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *I Enoch: A New Translation*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 82; Michael E. Stone, *4 Ezra: A Commentary on the Fourth Book of Ezra*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 42.

III. CONCLUSION

The objections addressed in this paper—whether from skeptics, Unitarians, or those shaped by Jewish monotheism—reveal that resistance to the doctrine of the Trinity often arises not from malice, but from misunderstanding, contextual gaps, or theological presuppositions shaped after the rise of Christianity. When rightly understood within the framework of biblical revelation, Second Temple Judaism, and historic Christian theology, the doctrine of the Trinity is not an innovation—it is a faithful articulation of truths already embedded in Scripture.

The idea that God is one in essence yet exists eternally as three persons is complex, but not incoherent. It provides the only consistent way to account for the biblical data: the Father who sends, the Son who is sent and saves, and the Spirit who indwells and empowers. Far from violating monotheism, the Trinity reveals its full richness—a unity that is not solitary, and a love that is eternal even before creation.

Moreover, Jewish objections—while weighty—often stem from a post-Christian polemical shift. The early Jewish belief in divine plurality, the divine Son of Man, and the Suffering Servant all laid the groundwork for what Christians would later understand as the Incarnation and Trinity. The church did not invent these doctrines; it preserved and clarified them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To reject the Trinity is not merely to misunderstand Christian theology—it is to miss the full beauty of how God reveals Himself, relates to His creation, and redeems it through the Son by the Spirit, all according to the eternal will of the Father. The Trinity is not a theological puzzle—it is the heartbeat of the gospel.

This Trinitarian confession finds not only theological expression, but liturgical and cosmic declaration in the act of baptism. As I argue in *Baptism as a Cosmic Declaration*,²² baptism is not merely a symbolic ritual or denominational boundary marker. It is a public renunciation of darkness and a declaration of allegiance to the Triune God. To be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to enter into the very life of the Trinity and to participate in God's redemptive mission. It is not a private moment of reflection but a cosmic act of warfare—a statement to the powers that rule this age that one has been transferred to the kingdom of the Son (Col. 1:13).

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²² D. Gene Williams Jr., *Baptism as a Cosmic Declaration*, accessed April 2025, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

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Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 53; see also 4Q285, Zechariah 12:10, and Daniel 9:26.

