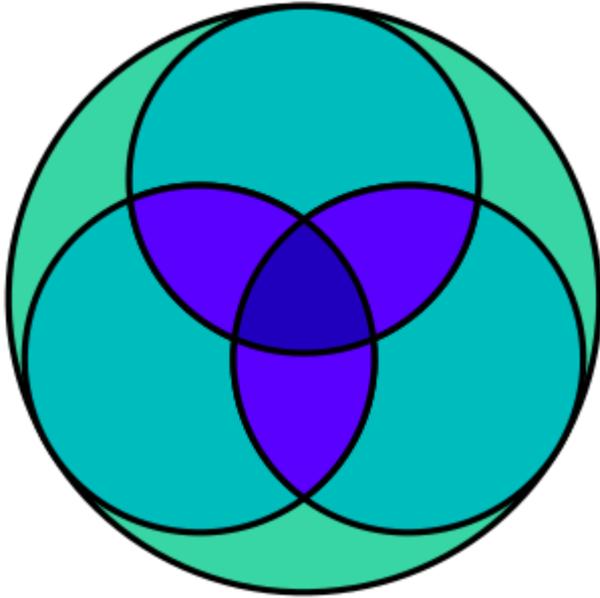


THE DOCTRINE OF TRINITY



If we want to approach the doctrine of the Trinity, we have to say from the very beginning that with the doctrine of the Trinity we are describing something that cannot actually be described in words and cannot be understood with human reason. Just as we cannot explain or understand God, can we make the doctrine of Trinity comprehensible to the human mind. When we approach God, it is actually only possible in prayer. We can only observe God in awe and prayerfully we are amazed at what it means that God the Father created the world; that Jesus Christ saved us and that the Holy

Spirit gives us faith. Meanwhile, however, we have to realize that mind is limited and cannot grasp God. However when people have tried to explain the incomprehensible logically, one has often gone too far. These misunderstandings have usually gone too far in two very different directions. One direction divorced God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from one another as if they were three different gods. The artwork in our text can easily give reason to think that there are actually three gods: a kind of polytheism.



Early Christian depiction of the Trinity

On the other hand, however, it is also possible to in another direction by merging the three persons: God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in such a way that the three persons are no longer recognizable. According to this misconception God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have no separate identity but are mixed into the one God. The Bible repeatedly confirms (even in the New Testament!) that there is one God. On the other hand, it also confirms that Jesus is God as well as it confirms that the Holy Spirit is God. (See the lectures on Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In doing so, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit remain different persons, but they are one in the will and in essence.

The Islamic Criticism against the Trinity: In Islam it was simply assumed that Christians believe in three different gods. According to the teaching of Islam, it is unlawful to think of three Gods. The Koran calls Shirk. According to Islam, this is the worst unbelief ever. Therefore, it would be better to disbelieve than to believe in the Trinity.

God does not forgive him for having three Gods. (other gods). Other than this sin, God forgives if he wants to. When one of them (one) adds God (other gods), he hath concocted a mighty sin."(Sure 4,116)

At the beginning, however, it has to be said that the Koran does not even know the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In Sure 5, Mohammad even mistakenly thought that the Trinity included Mary.

Sure 5, verse 116:"And when Allah will say:" O Jesus, Son of Mary, have you spoken to men:"Accept me and my mother as two gods beside Allah?"

In contrast to the doctrine of the Trinity, Tauhid is taught in Islam. (The uniqueness of God). Tauhid is, so to speak, the Islamic foundation of the doctrine of God. It means that God is separated from the principle of creation. God alone has the essence of the divine and creation is strictly separated from everything divine. According to this teaching, people and worldly objects cannot have any part at all in God's nature. And when you add things from creation to God, you commit the worst sin of all. It is interesting, however, that in the Christian Bible (Old and New Testaments!) God enters and participates in the history of mankind time and again. He appears to Moses in the burning bush (Genesis 3:1-12). He even fought with Jacob (Genesis 32:23ff) and he was in a white cloud leading the people of Israel (Genesis 13:17ff). In the Old Testament we also find the wonderful promise. "I will make my dwelling among you" (Ge 26:11). Since Mohammad also used parts of the Old Testament, it becomes interesting when he quotes precisely those texts where God physically enters into world history. This is the case, for example, with Moses and the burning bush: Islamic scholars are still worrying about precisely these scriptural passages today. They ask themselves the question:"How can God be in the burning bush at the same time as being the eternal God who reigns over all times? This discussion is also pertaining to the Koran. Since the 8th century there has been an inner-Islamic dispute about the question of whether the Koran was created, or whether the Koran exists simultaneously with God from all eternities Those who said that the Koran was not created had, so to speak, the cardinal Islamic problem. Namely, if the Qur' an were to have a share in God's eternity, it would then be part of God. Then one must consequently worship the Qur' an just as one would worship Allah! This dispute, which has not stopped until today, is about the basic problem: Can God enter into world history? And would God lose a part of His divine majesty if He became human? In Islam, this question is answered vehemently with no! In Christianity, we are equally astonished by the question that God enters human history. But we answer this question vehemently with yes! God enters history! It is at precisely this point that we repeatedly reach the limits of comprehension. Above all, this becomes clear in the place where Jesus dies on the cross. Can God be so humiliated that He dies a human death? Yes, can God die at all? No, we cannot understand this. But we worship Gods all-knowing power and wisdom and are amazed! And recognize that nothing is impossible with God! Yes, God can even humiliate himself. And can certainly also die the death of men. For nothing is impossible for God! When the Holy Spirit comes, we are equally amazed at God's action. This has already been the case on the first day of Pentecost: all the people were amazed that not only Jesus Christ has authority and in the power of the Spirit, but also the completely normal disciples of Jesus were working with and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Later the Christians were again amazed, for the Holy Spirit appeared not only among the Jews, but to all nations. These are the facts that we can read in the biblical story and follow with adoration. The Trinity doctrine itself is not found in the Bible. That is why Islamic critics often say that the Trinity was an invention of Christians in the first 400 years after Christ. We can also argue that the teaching of Tauhid is nowhere in the Koran. Also this word was invented only afterwards by Muslim scholars.

In summary, the Trinity's doctrine is intended against the aberrations that had arisen during the time of the first church. In the Trinity we state that God is one. But we also note that God Himself is inseparably present in Jesus, just as He is inseparably present with the Holy Spirit. And yet God the Father is a different person than Jesus and a different person than the Holy Spirit. We cannot

understand how this is done. According to logical principles, it is also not possible that Jesus can die and at the same be the eternal God. It is also illogical that we believe in a God and at the same time say that one God comes to us in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. But that is the miracle of the Trinity. In Islam, Christians are criticized for having opened a doorway with the doctrine of the Trinity, so to speak, by which Jesus and the Holy Spirit are now added to God. According to their criticism, one could then declare everything to be God, just as it is the case in polytheistic religions. But we Christians don't do that... That Jesus is God and that the Holy Spirit is God is not arbitrary. These are facts that we draw from God's revelation. We don't make everything God. But where God reveals Himself to us and God shows himself, we accept and worship Him. Again and again we find that our salvation really depends only on the fact that it is really God who enters our history. A prophet or good man cannot save us from sin. Sin is so great that only God can take away this sin. This is what Jesus did on the cross! Similarly, when it comes to faith: We humans really cannot come to faith alone. God himself must already dwell in our hearts. He does this by the Holy Spirit coming to us!