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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Trinity

O People of the scripture, do not commit excess in your religion (by attributing divine qualities to the creations of Allaah and worshiping them excessively or say about Allaah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allaah and His word which he directed to Mary, and a soul (created by a command) from Him. So believe in Allaah and His messengers. Do not say “Three,” desist – it will be better for you. Indeed, Allaah is One God, glory be to Him, exalted is He above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on the earth. And sufficient is Allaah as a Disposer of affairs

{an-Nisaa: 171}

For the majority of Christians today, the trinity is a key concept, but for the early followers of Jesus it was unheard of. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, officially approved by the Catholic Church, explains that the concept of the Trinity was introduced into Christianity in the fourth century:

“There is the recognition on the part of exegetes and biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics, that one should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely parallel recognition on the part of historians of dogma and systematic theologians that when one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to, say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. **It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma ‘One God in three persons’ became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought...it was the product of three centuries of doctrinal development.**”¹

¹ *The New Catholic Encyclopedia – Volume 14*, p.295

The Oxford Companion to the Bible which has entries from over two hundred and sixty scholars and academics from leading biblical institutes and universities in America and Europe states: **“Because the Trinity is such an important part of later Christian doctrine, it is striking that the term does not appear in the New Testament. Likewise, the developed concept of three co-equal partners in the Godhead found in later creedal formulations cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the canon.”**²

John McKenzie in *The Dictionary of the Bible* notes:

“The Trinity of God is defined by the Church as the belief that in God is three persons who subsist in one nature. **That belief as so defined was reached only in the 4th and 5th centuries AD and hence is not explicitly and formally a biblical belief.**”³

David Lyle Jeffrey, writing in the *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* mention: “According to orthodox

² Bruce Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 782-783

³ John McKenzie, *The Dictionary of the Bible*, p899

Christian doctrine, God is one nature in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. No one of them precedes or created the others or stands above them in power or dignity. In precise theological terms, they are one in substance (or essence), coeternal and co-equal. **The doctrine so stated does not appear in scripture, the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was hammered out gradually over a period of three centuries or more.** Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the coeternity and coequality of the divine persons remained a matter of theological dispute, and are thus frequently discussed in the context of heresy. In 381 the bishops convened again at Constantinople and set forth the orthodox doctrine in its final form.”⁴

F.J. Wilken, the Australian Baptist, wrote in *Christadelphianism*: “In the Old Testament, **the Unity of God, was clearly affirmed. The Jewish creed, repeated in every synagogue today was ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord (Deut. 6:4). This was the faith of the first Christians,** so Paul writes, “There is one god and Father of all, Who is above

⁴ David Lyle Jeffrey, *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, p.785

all and through all and in you all” (Eph. 4:6). **But gradually some addition or modification of this creed was found necessary.**⁵

Regarding textual evidence of the Trinity, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* highlights: **“The text about the three heavenly witnesses (1 John 5: 7 *KJV*) is not an authentic part of the New Testament.”**⁶

“1 John 5: 7 in the King James Version reads: ‘There are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one’ but this is an interpolation of which there is no trace before the late fourth century.”⁷

The *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* reports: “1 John 5: 7 in the *Textus Receptus* (represented in the King James Version) makes

⁵ F.J. Wilken, *Christadelphianism*

⁶ *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible – Volume 4*, p.711

⁷ *ibid.* p. 871

it appear that John had arrived at the doctrine of the Trinity in explicit form (“the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost”), **but this text is clearly an interpolation since no genuine Greek manuscript contains it.”**⁸

Edward Gibbon also recognized that this was a fabrication and while this fact is now widely accepted as fact and has been removed from most translations of the Bible, such acceptance took time. Richard Porson defended Gibbon, later publishing devastatingly conclusive proof that the verse was first inserted by the Church into the Bible at the end of the fourth century. Regarding his finding, Porson concluded:

“His structures are founded in argument, enriched with learning, and enlivened with wit, and his adversary neither deserves nor finds any quarter at his hands. **The evidence of the three heavenly witnesses would now be rejected in any court of justice; but prejudice is blind, authority is deaf, and our vulgar bibles will ever be polluted by this spurious text.**”⁹

⁸ *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, p. 1020

⁹ James Bentley, *Secrets of Mount Sinai*, pp.30-33