**The Trinity**

To start, we must understand what the Trinity is and where we see the Trinity in scripture. The word “trinity” comes from the Latin word “trinitas” which means “the tripleness”. It was coined by early Christian writer Tertullian to describe the doctrine of God being three “persons” in one.

The doctrine of the trinity states that God in his completeness is three different beings that each have different roles and qualities than the other beings. These three beings are believed to co-exist, all at the same time and throughout all eternity. The orthodox view of the Trinity as accepted in most denominations of the Christian church rejects the concept of modalism. Modalism is the view that the Trinity is three separate forms that God can take at any given point, but that God can only be one form at a time. This is very different from the conventional view of the Trinity being three separate “persons” that exist and make up the fulness of God and His glory all at once.

The three persons of the Trinity are as follows: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each one of these persons has different roles and qualities, and these roles and qualities can be found in Scripture. In addition, there are multiple passages where we see the three “persons” of God existing at the same time, refuting the doctrine of modalism. The three “persons’ of the Trinity are God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.

**God the Father**

Genesis 1-3, Exodus 19:18-25, 1 Samuel 3:1-14, Job 1:1-12, Jeremiah 29:11, Habakkuk 1:5, Matthew 3:13-16, John 3:16.

*Qualities of God the Father*

God the Father is an eternal being, as are the other two persons of the Trinity. God the Father is a physical being in some way. We see this in Genesis 3 as He walks through the garden and his walking is heard audibly. God the Father is likely not physical in the way that we are physical. For example, His body/physical being is likely much different than ours, but He is clearly a physical being and is unlike the Holy Spirit in this way. God the Father is called “the Father” because He is Father to Christ and is the Father in truth of all those who put their faith in Christ (John 1:12) Because of this, the qualities of God the Father are displayed to us through “Fatherly” roles.

*Roles of God the Father*

Author of Creation- Genesis 1:3 “Then God said”. God the Father spoke creation into being. His words literally authored and dictated everything in the universe. Everything we see is from the design, or authorship, of God the Father.

Lawgiver- Exodus 19:18-25. God gives Moses and the Israelites the 10 Commandments. God the Father is Himself the standard of righteousness, so every law is subject to His standard of righteousness.

Judge- Revelation 20:11-15. God will be the ultimate judge of righteousness at the end of eternity. God also assumes the role of judge throughout Scripture at other points, but this is the ultimate judgement that He will carry out.

Hearer and Answerer of Prayer- Luke 11:2. In Jesus’ prayer, He models praying to the Father. When we pray, we pray to the Father, through the sacrifice of Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. All three persons of the Trinity are at work in prayer, but God the Father is the person of the Trinity that hears and answers our prayers.

**God the Son (Jesus)**

Isaiah 7:14, Hosea 11:11, Psalm 8:5-6, John 1:1-5, Luke 2:1-20, Luke 23-24, John 21, Acts 1:6-9

*Qualities of Jesus*

Jesus, like the Father and the Spirit is also, eternal. He existed at the beginning of time as seen in John 1:1-5. Like God the Father, Jesus is a physical being, though his physical existence is different than the Father’s. Jesus likely existed in the same physical state as the Father until He came down to the Earth to be born as a baby. At that point in time, Jesus took on human flesh and was truly God and truly man. Jesus has existed physically with a human body and did so until He ascended to the Father in Acts 1. When Jesus ascended, He would have received a different form of a physical body than what we have on Earth. Jesus came from God and referred to Himself as God’s son in John 10:29. However, though Jesus is God’s begotten Son, He is no less than the Father because of this. In fact, one verse later in John 10:30, Jesus says that He and the Father are one. His coming from the Father has no impact on His deity. Jesus is just as much God as the other two persons of the Trinity. Also, though Jesus is begotten from God, He is not a created being. This is outside of our understanding as humans. Jesus existed with God the Father and the Holy Spirit at in the beginning in Genesis 1:1 and we see this in John 1.

*Roles of Jesus*

Executer of Creation- Genesis 1:3 & John 1:3. God the Father is the author of creation in that He spoke what would be created. Jesus is the executor of creation in that all things came into being *through* Him. The Father spoke and Jesus executed what the Father directed. This is seen when reading Genesis 1:3 in conjunction with John 1:3. These passages together also reinforce that Jesus Himself, though from God the Father, was not created from God the Father.

Fulfillment of the Law- Matthew 5:17. God the Father gave us His law for multiple reasons. It is a display of His character and His nature. It is His standard for righteousness that our lives are measured and judged by. Jesus came as a literal fulfillment of God’s law. Here is what this means: Jesus fulfilled all three types of law in the Old Testament. He fulfilled the moral law by keeping it perfectly. He fulfilled the ceremonial law by embodying the glory that the ceremonies and traditions are meant to point to, and He fulfilled the judicial law by becoming the sacrifice for the sins of those who repent and believe in Him and providing a just means of salvation through love, grace, and mercy.

Our acquittal- Romans 3: 23-24, Revelation 20:11-15. Acquittal has one primary definition in our society: to be freed from a charge of an offense. In previous years, acquittal also meant a repayment of a debt. Jesus work on the cross satisfies both definitions on behalf of those who repent and believe. Through His sacrifice, the sin debt of those who trust in Him for salvation is paid in full. Because of this, those who trust in Jesus are also dismissed of the charges of their sin, which is why no one who is in Christ is present at the Great White Throne judgement in Revelation 20. So, Jesus has provided our acquittal from sin, completely.

High Priest- Hebrews 2:17, 4:14-16- God the Father is the hearer and answerer of our prayers, and Jesus is the high priest that restored our fellowship to the Father. The High priest in Ancient Israel was the person responsible for conducting the atonement sacrifice on behalf of the people. Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus has fulfilled the atonement required for the sins of those who have trusted in Him. If we have trusted in Jesus then we are able to pray confidently to the Father, knowing that through His atonement we are restored into fellowship with God the Father.

**God the Holy Spirit**

Genesis 1:2, Genesis 6:3, 1 Samuel 10:10, Ezekiel 2:2, Mark 1:9-11, John 14:16-31, Acts 2:1-4, 1 Corinthians 3:16, Romans 5:5

*Qualities of the Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is eternal, as are God the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit was present in the Genesis account of creation, hovering over the face of the waters before the Father spoke. The Holy Spirit is not, however, physical. This is why it is called the “Holy Spirit”. It is not a bodily being. Despite not being bodily, the Holy Spirit still displays qualities of a person, as do the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit is referred to by Jesus as “He” in John 14:26. The Holy Spirit speaks (Heb. 3:7), reasons (Acts 15:28), searches hearts and minds (1 Corinthians 2:10-11) and gives fellowship (2 Corinthians 13:14). Based on these qualities, the Holy Spirit should be considered a “person” despite its spiritual nature. The Holy Spirit is sent out by God the Father in the Old Testament, and by the Father at the request of Jesus in the New Testament (John 14:16). From this we know the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and Jesus both, just as Jesus submits to the Father. It should be stressed that this does not take away from the deity of the Holy Spirit. It is as much God as the Father and Jesus are God. It is simply its own “person” with its own role and qualities, as are the Father and Jesus.

*Roles of the Holy Spirit*

Dwells in and Among Creation- Genesis 1:2, Genesis 6:3, John 14:16. The Holy Spirit dwelled among the Earth as it was being created. This is a foreshadowing of one of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit throughout the existence of God’s creation. Once the Earth and its inhabitants were formed, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father to “strive with man” (Genesis 6:3) and also to empower specific people according to God’s plan and glory (1 Samuel 10:10). In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is sent out by the Father by the request of Jesus on the day of Pentecost to dwell in and empower believers (John 14:6 and Acts 2). The Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of God’s omnipresence by dwelling among creation and in believers.

Illuminator- Ephesians 1:17-18, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13. The Holy Spirit is our illuminator. This simply means that He gives us the wisdom and knowledge we need to understand the truth of scripture and God’s plan and purpose for our lives. The Bible says that God’s Word should be a light to our path. This is where the term “illumination” comes from. The Word cannot be a light unless we can understand its truth. We cannot understand unless the Holy Spirit allows us to understand. Through this process of illumination, people are drawn to salvation through faith in Christ.

Intercessor- Romans 8:26-27. The Holy Spirit equips us to pray to the Father by interceding for us with “groanings too deep for words”. The idea here is that, though we are able to have fellowship with God the Father through Christ’s atonement as our High Priest, we are not able to properly communicate with the Father because of our lowliness. The Holy Spirit’s role in prayer is to step in on our behalf and essentially translate for us before God the Father. So, we pray to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

Equipper- Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 12. The Holy Spirit equips and empowers us to live the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is what is working out the sanctification process through us as we are here on Earth. The Spirit is in us and constantly making us new. The fruit of the spirit are behaviors that all believers are equipped with by the Spirit to display God’s love to the world. Spiritual gifts are qualities given to believers according to their callings that empower them and equip them for the life God has planned for them. We can not have either of these without the power of the Holy Spirit at work within us.

**The Persons of the Spirit Together in Scripture**

Genesis 1 and John 1 together, Mark 1:9-11, Matthew 28:19-20

In these passages, we see a direct opposition to the doctrine of Modalism. In these passages, the Trinity of God is fully present and at work at the same time. These give us a good indication of how the trinity functions as three separate persons, but one unified being.

**Conclusion**

The Trinity is God in His full glory. That is to say, if the nature of God’s being is glorious, then His glory is fully present in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Any doctrine that teaches against the doctrine of the Trinity is limiting the glory of God, to whom all glory should be ascribed. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each function independently of each other in their unique roles and with their unique qualities, but they are all united as one being in terms of their holiness, will, glory, and Lordship over all to make up all of the attributes that make the being of God what He is: glorious.