

Patterns of Three

In Scripture, both Old and New Testament, the Lord continually gives us types and shadows or symbols of spiritual concepts which are mirrored in the natural (prophetic symbolism). This is one of God's methods for revealing spiritual concepts in ways we can understand.

"God is Love"

1 John 4:8

Love needs an object to be complete. God was complete before He created man to love. He did not need man to be complete. By definition, "God *is* love." He exists as love, fully complete in Himself. The Father loves the Son who loves the Spirit who loves the Son who loves the Father who loves ... etc. An endless circle of love. Fully complete.

The number three represents divine perfection. By design, the Lord created many things to be in perfect balance and completeness, represented by the number three. It is not a coincidence that this extremely important pattern is found in the most obvious, profound examples of Scripture and creation itself. Whenever something is repeated so obviously and frequently in patterns, God is trying to get our attention! Take for instance the concept of light:

God is Light: The property of light, like God, is threefold.

1. The *Heat* ray (**red**) which is felt but not seen. (The Holy Spirit)
John 3:8, 1 John 4:12
2. The *Light* ray (**yellow**) which is seen, not felt. (The Son)
John 1:1-9, John 9:5, John 12:44-46, John 14:9-10, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3
3. The *Actinic or Chemical* ray (**blue**) which is neither seen nor felt.
(The Father) The presence of this light is revealed by its effects in a chemical action, which produces changes, as in photography.
Colossians 1:15, 1 John 4:12, John 1:18

Interesting note: In the study of light (optics) in modern physics, light is noted as the presence of *all* color.

The following are just a few examples of the pattern of three found in Scripture and creation:

- The Temple design: Outer court, Inner Court, Holy of Holies
- Sun, Moon, Stars
- Kingdoms: Heaven, Earth, Hell
- Heavens: 1st (earth), 2nd (spiritual realm), 3rd (Heaven)
- Time: past, present, future
- Classifications: animal, vegetable, mineral
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
- Attributes of God: omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent
- Dimensions of the natural world: length, breadth, height
- Solid, Liquid, Gas
- The Angels cry: Holy, Holy, Holy
- Faith, Hope, and Love
- Ministry of Jesus: Prophet, Priest, King
- Three years of Christ's earthly ministry
- Christ rose on the third day
- Christ was 33 when crucified
- Christ was crucified the third hour of the day
- Three hours of darkness during crucifixion
- Three Temptations of Christ
- Temptation of man (**1 John 2:16**): lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life
- Attributes of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil: **Genesis 3:6**
- Three items in the Arc of the Covenant: Aaron's rod, manna, tablets of the law
- Life cycle: birth, death, resurrection
- **Ecclesiastes 4:12** "A cord of three strands is not easily broken."
- The One who was, and is, and is to come
- **Hebrews 13:8** Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forevermore
- Primary colors: red, yellow, blue from these come all the rest!

Can you think of any other patterns of three?

Created in His Image - The Trinity of Man

Our discipleship journey in Christ is clearly and distinctly symbolized by the Israelites journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. After leaving Egypt (salvation), their real challenge had just begun! They wandered in the wilderness and eventually (those that qualified or endured) entered the Promised Land. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the Lord did not remove all the enemies and giants. They still had to be overcome and conquered. When we accept Jesus as our Savior that means we are forgiven, and that heaven is our eternal destiny. When we seek to learn to walk in His Spirit, we begin the process of sanctification which means we begin conquering the hold that the enemy has had on our life. This brings maturity and the fruit of the Spirit in this life, and rewards in the next. But greatest of all, it brings us into closer communion with our Heavenly Father. Before we talk about how to grow in Christ and walk in the Spirit, we first need to understand that there is a distinction between the soul and the spirit. It is the difference between being what the Apostle Paul called the "fleshly or carnal" believer and the "spiritual" believer.

Man is made in the image of God, a trinity - yet one. **Genesis 1:26**, Then God said, "Let **us** make man in **our** image, according to **our** likeness..." **Genesis 2:7**, "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground (body) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spirit) and the man became a living being (soul)". Man is a composite of body, soul, and spirit. These divisions are separate in function, yet one in unity. Before regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation, man's spirit is dead to God. In this instance, dead does not mean to cease to exist, but more like dormant and separated from God, the source of all life. After being born again, man's spirit is quickened or awakened to God and restored to relationship and communion with God. Although salvation of the spirit takes place immediately, the sanctification of the soul is a process. We then begin the process of leaving the "old man" behind and putting on the "new man" (**Colossians 3:9-10**, **2 Corinthians 5:17**). It is not instant and does not happen with one prayer. It can be referred to as the process of sanctification, walking in the Spirit, or the crucified life or many other scriptural analogies.

The Hebrews traditionally viewed man as a dual creature. They saw man as body and soul and/or spirit. This belief is called "dichotomy". They combined soul and spirit and rarely made any differentiation. That has also produced a major stumbling block for them to accept the Messiah as being divine and not merely human.

Greek philosophy, on the other hand, saw man as a tri-part being or "trichotomy". But sometimes because of this philosophy, they so completely separated the three aspects of man that beliefs began to rise that saw everything that was not "spiritual" as being evil (Gnosticism). If we neglect to make a distinction it causes confusion and error in theology; but to make too much distinction or separation also causes error. One example of this is found in modern Judaism. They understand the Scriptures that say, "God is One" (the schema—**Deuteronomy 6:4**) to mean that the doctrine of the trinity would be idolatry because they do not yet accept the understanding of how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can possibly be *One*. In contrast, you have the belief of the Jehovah's Witness that claim believe in Jesus but separate Him from the Godhead of the Trinity and thus deny His deity. Likewise, Mormonism takes a "pluralistic" stance where they view the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three separate gods (as well as believing that you and I are gods). Understanding the doctrine of three-in-one is essential for the flow of truth in the Scriptures.

Some may believe that when The Lord said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image," He was referring to the spiritual or symbolic image, but it is much more than that. It is being created in the very design of God himself, a Triune entity. You cannot "scientifically" understand the Trinity any more than you can "scientifically" explain life. Yet even science understands that when "life" (the breath of God) leaves the body, the matter (body) eventually ceases to "live".

It is sometimes easier for us to distinguish the Son from the Father because the Son came in the flesh and that is easier for our minds to comprehend. But we have a much more difficult time separating the Holy Spirit from either the Son or the Father because it is the *essence* of who They *are*! Likewise, to separate our spirit from our soul or our bodies is to take away either life or personality; it cannot be done and retain a "whole" person.

We cannot make the mistake of separating man into three parts so distinctly that the three could have different destinies, personalities or wills. That cannot happen! What affects one part of man affects all of man. One cannot make a decision in just the body, or soul, or spirit that does not affect the other. They are different in function and purpose, but never totally separate from the whole of man. Jesus or the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the Father without connection to the other because God is *One*. Neither can man's body, soul, or spirit be seen as complete apart from the whole in this life. Yet, at the same time, if we do not make a separation of function at all, both for the trinity of God and for the trinity of man, we will not understand what may seem to be apparent contradictions of Scripture.

To walk in the Spirit does not mean that we abandon our bodies or souls as the Gnostics would teach. That would not be possible. Neither does it mean that our bodies or souls are evil. When God created us, He said in fact that it was, "*very good*". Before the fall of man, the body and soul were in submission to the spirit, which had direct and unbroken communication with God. When the incarnation of the Son came, the sacrifice of His life which ripped the veil separating the body, soul and spirit, made it possible once again for man to be ruled by the Spirit of God through man's spirit.

The mind and the body are good but fallen. If given dominion, *they* will sin against God. They are to be governed by the Spirit. This was the first order created and is still what God wants today - first Spirit, then soul, then body. We are not to view the soul as evil or bad, but as a gift from God, now corrupt, which needs to be trained and brought under submission to the Spirit and sanctified - set apart and made whole and complete.

So, in understanding the doctrine of the Trinity, we must realize that there is a distinction or separation between the body, soul, and spirit. But they never stand completely alone, but rather always as one, just as there is distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet God is One.

Additional Scriptures for Study to Help Us Understand the Trinity of Man

1. **Matthew 26:41**

2. **1 Thessalonians 5:23**

3. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

4. **Jude 18-19**

5. **1 Peter 2:11**

6. **Proverbs 25:28**

7. **1 Corinthians 2:14**

8. **Philippians 4:7**

9. **James 1:21**

10. **Hebrews 4:12**

11. **Proverbs 17:22**

12. **1 Corinthians 3:16**

13. **James 2:26**

14. **Luke 1:46-47**

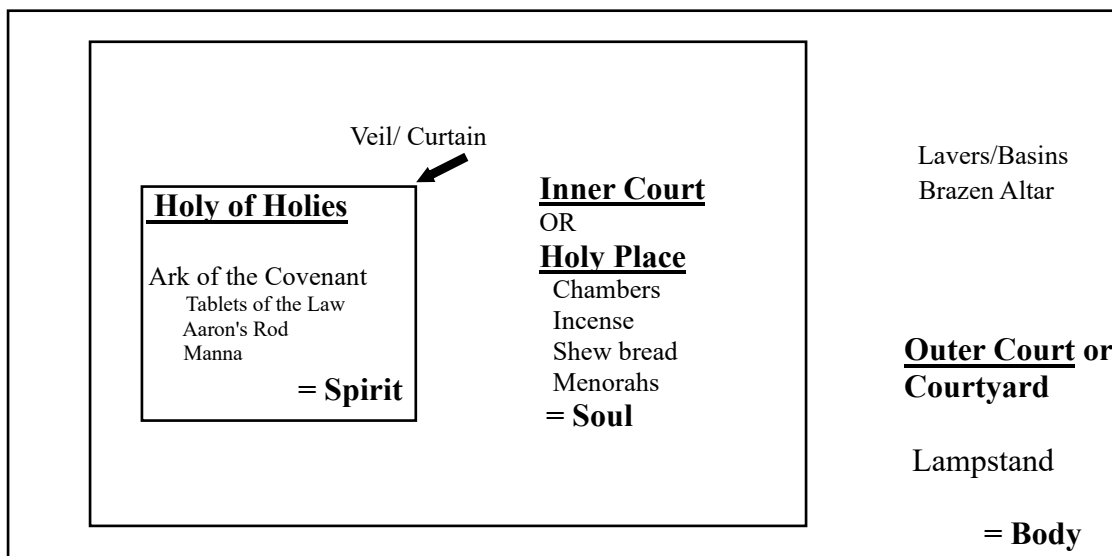
15. **Romans 12:1-2**

16. **John 6:63**

The Trinity of Man Displayed in the Temple Design

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that the Holy Spirit lives in you?"
1 Corinthians 6:19

Temple/Tabernacle Design = Design of Man



- **Courtyard (Outer Court) = *Body* (1 Corinthians 6:19)**

Lampstand= Light of the World, Jesus

External position visible to all

Controlled by "senses" - sight, sound, smell, touch, hearing

World conscious

Lit by daylight or sunlight, "Light of the World" displayed – grand menorah

Noise

Lavers= repentance, washing

Brazen Altar = blood sacrifice

- **Holy Place (Inner Court) = *Soul* (Exodus 25:31-40)**

Curtain or Veil = flesh or carnal nature

Internal workings of Mind, Will, & Emotions

Controlled by emotions, thoughts, desires

Self-conscious

Lit by lampstands of seven branches (revelation – Spirit of God)

Fellowship and communion with other saints

Sound

Place of prayer, petition, intercession and worship

Inner Chambers (heart)

- **Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) = *Spirit* (Isaiah 11:3)**

Ark of the Covenant, which contained:

Tablets of the Commandments = law of God on our heart

Aaron's rod that budded = New (eternal) Life

Jar of Manna = the daily (Rhema) Word of God

Innermost part

Submitted to the Spirit of God, conscience, communion, intuition

God-conscious

Communion with God

No light or sound in the Holy of Holies - *everything is carried on by faith, beyond sight, sense or understanding*