

Nabeel Qureshi's explanation of the Trinity

Nabeel Qureshi's explanation is this: God is one in being and three in person. It is not a contradiction because if I said one in being and three in being that is a contradiction. What's the difference between being and person? A being is that **quality or essence** that makes you **what** you are and a person is the quality that makes you **whom** you are.

Now what kind of a being am I? I'm a human being. Who am I? I'm David Newmarch. So **what** I am is a **human being**, that's **my being**. **Who** I am is David – that's my person. The two are not the same thing. All of us are the same being – we're **human beings** but none of us share the **same person** – we're all different **persons**.

So I am **one being with one person**. **God is one being with three persons** – Father, Son and Spirit. Is there anything like this on this earth? No. But does that mean that God cannot be one being and three persons? – absolutely not. He can be this – there's no way we can know these deeper things about God without revelation.

I think there's enough evidence about God to say that he exists. But how much can we know about God? I think revelation is needed to know the deeper things about God, and this is one of them. Tied in with this concept, then, of Trinity is the persons of God.

What does it mean for Jesus to be the Son of God? What does it mean for God the Father to be the Father. These are different roles in the Trinity. Often people see the word "son" and so say the son must be inferior to the Father. In a sense that's accurate – eg Jesus says "The Father is greater than I". How is it possible that Jesus is God when he says that the Father is greater than I? Eg Scott Morrison is PM of Australia and he is greater than I am. But he is a human just as I am. His being is equal to mine – he's a human being, I'm a human being. But his role is greater than mine (I'm just a pastoral assistant unsupervised) and so I'm inferior in that sense. So when Jesus says the Father is greater than I am the being is equal but the role is

different. And this is how the Trinity all comes into focus as we start to read the Scripture.

Some say that the Trinity was not there in the Old Testament. This is something new that Christians came up with. I don't think so. When you start to read the OT a bit more carefully through the lens of the NT.

Take Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created – Elohim the word for God is plural; so the word is saying in the beginning **Gods** created; but the word for created treats Elohim as singular. So right there in the beginning you have plurality and singularity in the godhead. You see it in the very first chapter where God refers to himself as “**we**” – how can God refer to himself as “we”? Some people say well the queen of England does that? However, the plural of majesty was not used at that time, it was not convention. Then God says we will create man in our image – male and female, we will make man. Male and female in his image and then it goes to plurality once again. Multiple times plurality in the godhead.

And in the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) – a statement that Jews would often recite twice a day; and a very important statement in a polytheistic society, “The Lord our God is one.” That word “one” (“*ehad*”) is not used to describe a singularity but is used to describe a cluster of grapes; you would refer to the cluster as one. So even in the Shema you have this reference to the plurality of God – and it's just clarified by Jesus. It's one of the most beautiful teachings about the depth of God's character and how he is unlike anything in this universe.