



THE BASICS OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Why is it Necessary to Know the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity?

Understanding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is essential for Christians who seek union with God and the inheritance of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. As Christ said, “And this is eternal life, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). An Orthodox Christian also confesses the truth of the Trinity by crossing themselves.

On a practical level, this knowledge is crucial for:

1. **Comprehending That “God is Love”**

Knowledge of the Trinity clarifies the statement “God is love” (1 John 4:8). If God were understood only as One, then His love might appear to exist only for His creation, leading to a perception of Him as Loving, rather than as infinite Love itself. The Trinity shows us that God’s Love has always existed within Himself. The Father eternally loves the Son and the Spirit; the Son loves the Father and the Spirit; the Spirit loves the Father and the Son. Each Divine Hypostasis loves itself, making God not only the Source of Divine Love but also its eternal Recipient.

2. **A Clear Understanding of the Holy Gospel and the Apostolic Epistles**

Knowledge of the Trinity is foundational for understanding Christ’s teachings and knowing who Christ is, whose Son He is, and who His Father is.

3. **Interpreting the Old Testament**

While the Old Testament predominantly speaks of God as the One Lord, certain passages gain full meaning only in light of the Holy Trinity. These include:

- God’s appearance to Abraham in the form of three visitors (Gen. 18:1-16)

- The psalmist's words: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 32:6). The Old Testament contains numerous such passages. (Note that the term "Spirit" does not always signify the third Person of the Trinity; at times, it denotes a singular Divine action.)

4. Preventing Theological Errors

Ignorance of the doctrine of the Trinity can lead to significant misunderstandings. A weak or superficial grasp of the Trinity has historically led to various heresies, as demonstrated by the history of the Church.

5. Engaging in Missionary Work

Knowledge of the Trinity is also essential for fulfilling Christ's command to "go and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19), as it lies at the heart of the Christian message.