“Prepare and submit a 4-5 page study of “The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity In Johanine and Pauline Theologies.”

The Trinitarian Theology of St. John

The Gospel of John seeks to clarify the contentious differences between Christianity and Judaism, going from “He whom God has sent.” to “the only-begotten Son of the Father.” John’s purpose was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah and that He was indeed the Logos who existed from the beginning of time and was truly the son of God. “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17 NKJV)

Our understanding of the Trinity is found in the Prologue to St. John's Gospel. He begins with the Son's relationship to the Father: “the Word was with God” St. John proclaims the generation of the Son from the father in eternity and his incarnation in time in John 1. The Patristic Fathers were perplexed by the difference between procession and generation. St. John the Damascene said, “We have learned that there is a difference between generation and procession, but the nature of the difference we in no wise understand.” However, Christ himself also explains his origin and mission from the father in John 12:47-50 and 8:25.
If the pre-incarnate word was already present at Creation, there must be an explanation of what was different when Christ was born of the Theotokos: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” John 1: 14 Christ was already in the world, according to John 1:10.

The distinction between the sending of the Son and his pre-incarnate presence helps to overcome any claims of subordination, claiming that the Son was in anyway inferior to the Father.

Salvation comes from not only believing in God, but believing in His Son. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16 NKJV)

In his conversation with Philip, in John 14:7-10, Christ responds to Philip's request to see the Father: Christ emphasizes his equality with the Father: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” and further declares that “the Father who dwells in Me does the works.” Many see Christ as simply a holy man. These people do not have the eyes of faith that would allow them to recognize who Jesus really is. Christ’s appearance in the world in the form of a servant hides or camouflages his equality with the Father to many. It will take the presence and Grace of the Holy Spirit to reveal this to mankind. “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (John 17:3 NKJV)

But John goes on to explain the Father-Son relationship in John 10:30 “I and My Father are one.” and 14:28 “You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.”

Jesus the Son comes from the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit, He is conceived by the Spirit, baptized with the Spirit, and let by the Spirit into the desert to be tested, in the Spirit he proclaims the gospel to the poor and heals the sick; finally, he sacrifices himself through the Spirit. Vladimir Lossky's foundational doctrine, according to his son Nicholas, was that
deification, or union with God which “implies seriously taking the Holy Spirit's role in the economy of salvation.” Indeed, the Eastern Church teaches that deification (theosis) is the goal of human existence.

However, John quotes our Lord who explains that there is more to come: Jesus promises to pray that the Father would send a comforter/protector to be with his followers: “The Spirit of Truth.” John 15:16-17 In John 16:12-15 It says, When Christ ascends into heaven, He will send his Spirit, to guide them into all truth. It is clear from John 15:26 that the Spirit is different from the Father, and proceeds from the father, which is different from the generation of the Son. Nevertheless, both the Son and the Spirit were sent into the world, but with different tasks assigned by the Father. The Son “to quicken our personal liberty.” and the Spirit to “unite itself with our nature and regenerate it.”

**St. Paul’s Trinitarian Doctrine**

St. Paul, unlike the other Apostles, did not sit at the feet of the Jesus. There does not even appear to be any evidence that he had actually met Jesus Christ in the flesh. St. Paul learned by direct teaching of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul is known as the Apostle to the Gentiles therefore, he does not mention the roles of Christ as "messenger" and prophet" which were important for the Jews. St. Paul met Christ on the Road to Damascus when Christ was already an exalted heavenly being and was sitting at the right hand of God the father. St. Paul's introduction to Jesus Christ was similar to that experienced by St. Peter on Mount Tabor: both of them experienced the uncreated light of glory that was proof of the Messiah's divinity. Interestingly, St. Paul seems to be equating the Spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ when he writes in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
"Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (NKJV)

Jaroslav Pelikan points out that the Son is simultaneously less than and equal to the father which is emphasized in the quasi-creedal hymn to The Humbled and Exalted Christ

Philippians 2:5-11  "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (NKJV)

St. Paul closes most of his letters with the benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Paul's earliest mention of the Trinity is found in 2 Corinthians 13:14 “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (NKJV) St. Paul's driving goal is to nurture the Body of Christ, which has been given life by the Spirit of God beginning at Pentecost which the early Christians viewed not only as an expanded form of the mystery of the Transfiguration but as the fulfillment of Joel 2:28 and thus the inauguration of the Messianic age.

The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost and this was the birth of the Holy Church, which is the communion of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's activity is thus different, but complimentary to the love of God and the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Peter explained the meaning of Pentecost in the earliest Apostolic reference to the Trinity when he preached his
It is to this Church,—this Body— that St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12 that the Spirit has given spiritual gifts for the benefit of all the Body of Christ.18 Also given to the Church are the fruit(s) of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:21-23 and Ephesians 5:9) In this way, according to St. Gregory of Nazianzus, mankind's “soul is a breath of God, and, though heavenly, it suffers a mingling with the earthly.”19 The ongoing communion with the divine energy creates in a human soul the potential to become “a particle of divinity whose spirit is lit by the primordial light, which is God.”20
Bibliography


