

# Doctrine of Trinity Based on Qur'anic and Biblical Studies

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## Abstract

*This paper will discuss the problem of trinity as a doctrine that underlies the faith of Christianity. It is considered as a delusion theological doctrine which is both ambiguous and compelled. Al-Qur'an criticizes the confusion of trinity as a doctrinal astray of human invention possessing no basis from Allah and it has triggered major conflicts within the Christianity itself. The confusion of trinity will be revealed through the method on historical criticism based on Qur'anic and Biblical Studies the confusion of trinity is revealed. There are at least two aspects of the fallacy possessed by trinity, political aspect and the aberration of Christianity religious teachings. Moreover, there is an identical proof regarding the political interests of the Roman Emperor Constantine influencing the formulation of trinity at Nicaea Council 325 C.E. The influence was an invasion of polytheism and paganism into trinity confusing the elements of monotheism and polytheism. The distortion of religious teachings in trinity is the presence of teachings of Jesus Christ concerning an obligation to worship him as God, while it does not exist in Gospel. The doctrine of Jesus divinity came from Paul. It precisely deviated monotheism principle. Consequently, there was a conflict in Christianity schools in respect to trinity since that era up to the present day.*

**Keywords:** Doctrine, Trinity, Christian, al-Qur'an, Bibel.

## Abstrak

*Jurnal ini membahas permasalahan trinitas sebagai doktrin yang mendasari keimanan Kristen. Trinitas merupakan khayalan doktrin teologi yang rancu dan dipaksakan. Al-Qur'an mengkritik kekacauan trinitas itu sebagai doktrin menyesatkan buatan manusia yang tidak memiliki dasar ajaran dari Allah sehingga telah memicu berbagai konflik dalam tubuh umat Kristen sendiri. Melalui metode kritik sejarah yang berdasar pada pengkajian al-Qur'an dan Bibel, kerancuan doktrin trinitas tersebut terungkap sedikitnya dari dua aspek: aspek politik, dan aspek peyimpangan sumber ajaran agama. Kepentingan politik Kaisar Konstantin penguasa Romawi dalam memperkuat pengaruh kekuasaannya terbukti mewarnai perumusan doktrin trinitas pada Konsili Nicea 325 M. Pengaruh kekuasaan Romawi*

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*dalam doktrin itu adalah masuknya ajaran politeisme dan paganisme dalam konsep iman trinitas yang mencampuradukkan unsur tauhid dan kemusyrikan. Penyimpangan ajaran agama dalam doktrin trinitas itu adalah adanya ajaran Yesus Kristus yang mengajarkan penyembahan pada dirinya, padahal hal demikian tidak dijumpai dalam Injil. Ajaran untuk mempertuhankan Yesus berasal dari ajaran Paulus yang menyimpang dari ajaran tauhid yang diwarnai pengaruh ajaran filsafat helenisme. Akibatnya muncullah konflik di tubuh aliran-aliran Kristen mengenai konsep trinitas hingga saat ini.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Doktrin, Trinitas, Kristen, al-Qur'an, Bibel.*

## Introduction

Belief in a trinity is the foundation of Christians faith. Qur'an criticizes they who say that Allah is one of three in a trinity as the infidel or blasphemers. Therefore, the strongest Quranic polemic against Christian dogma concentrates on the Christian belief in the trinity and the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Quran considers the trinity to be an expression of polytheism and utterly rejects any ascription of divinity to Jesus. Christian belief in Christ's divinity is understood in the Quran to be in direct contradiction to the message preached by Jesus. The concept of salvation leads Christians to believe in Jesus Christ as the savior because Christians believe that Adam and Eva's sin should be compensated to save all mankind from original sin, for that reason God has atoned for all of human being by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christian fantasy to original sin and salvation is the root that directs Christians to believe in the dogma of the trinity as a formula of the essence of Jesus Christ. Due to the complexity of the concept there arose disputes between Christian Sect.

Al-Qur'an has mentioned three different concepts of trinity in three different verses. First, some of Christians who believe that Isa is Allah. Secondly, some of them who believe that he is one in a trinity. Thirdly, some of them who believe that he is one in a trinity. Their beliefs and creeds are numerous and contradict each other.

In this case, how the concept of trinity comes and why the concept of trinity ignites different perception among Christian sects should be discussed through the method on historical criticism on the basis of Quranic studies and Biblical studies on the following paragraph.

## The Definition and the Historical Background of Trinity

At the beginning of this journal it is important to define what trinity is and where did the Christian derived this term from? Those are to help our understanding toward this issue. To define the word trinity, it was difficult because the word "trinity" however never appeared in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Then the question here is where did this term came from?

The word "trinity" first used in its Greek form *Τβεάς* by Theophilus of Antioch (180 C.E.), it is not found in scripture, Christian theologians have seen adumbrations of the doctrine in the Biblical narratives.<sup>2</sup>

From the citation above, we might take a point that the root of trinity came from Greek term, which it is not directly derived from the Bible or even taught by Jesus and his disciples. However, Christians interpreted the term of trinity means that,

"The one God exists in three persons and one substance, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one, yet self-differentiated; the God who reveals Himself to mankind is one God equally in three distinct modes of existence, yet remains one through all eternity".<sup>3</sup>

The definition above often related to the gospel of Matthew: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of "the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Math 28.19). Brown said that the word "trinities" come from Latin word in 220 C.E. by Tertullian, third century writer and early Christian apologist from Carthage, who theorized the co-sharing of divinity between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit".<sup>4</sup> In this case, we found the term trinity was founded far years after the death of Jesus, so the question here, why Jesus him self did not define the term trinity? Why the term trinity only exists just after 325 C.E. in Nicaea Council, aren't they assumed that Christianity is the teaching of Jesus?

If we refer to the history of early Christianity we should find how the Christians sects contradict each other with the definition of

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<sup>1</sup> Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Alles, *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*, (New York: Fact On File, 2007), 456.

<sup>2</sup> F.L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church*, (New York: Oxford University press, 1997), 1641.

<sup>3</sup> Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Allen, *The Encyclopedia...*, 456.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence B. Brown, *MisGod'ed: A Road Map of Guidance and Misguidance Within the Abrahamic Religions*, (T.K: Booksurge Llc, 2008), 116.

God. Let us take an example of how Arius and his followers contradict the concept of God with Athanasius and his followers. Arius made a concept, that the true God was only the father alone and the Son was neither coeternal nor uncreated, since he received life and being from the Father. When the bishops gathered at Nicaea on 20 May 325 C.E. to resolve the crisis, very few would have shared Athanasius's view of Christ. Most held a position midway between Athanasius and Arius. However, Athanasius tried to compel his theology on the delegates and, with the Emperor breathing down their necks, only Arius and two of his brave escorts refused to sign his Creed. This made creation *ex nihilo* an official Christian doctrine for the first time, insisting that Christ was no mere creature or aeon. The Creator and Redeemer were one. The first seven ecumenical councils, pre-ceded by many local synods, achieved three they fixed the canon of Scripture, they clarified the definition of the nature of Jesus as Christ and Son of God, and they clarified the theology of the trinity. Finally, the Council of Nicaea 325 C.E. introduced the new term "homoousion", (the same substance between Jesus as Son of God with the Father) to establish the equality of Rome to settle disputes<sup>5</sup>.

Hence the Council of Nicaea has important aspect toward Christian belief, because through this Council the concept of trinity emerged and Christian began to achieve new life within Roman Empire. Nevertheless, what was behind this council, we should analyze it more detail, because the Nicaea Council was supported by Constantine at that time, and he was the first Roman Emperor who legalized the freedom to Christian adherents after long persecution which it is acknowledged later as the Edict of Milan. Than our question here, Is the dogma of trinity has relation with political interest within Constantine idea to unite the Roman empire at that time?

Let we refer to our history about Constantine Emperor. The history told that Christianity until the fourth century was illegal in the Roman Empire, because Christians refused to "venerate" or give a kind of worship to the Emperor, but in 313 C.E. Emperor Constantine won an important battle after seeing a cross in the sky and hearing the words, "in this sign you will conquer".<sup>6</sup> He attributed his victory to the Christian God, and shortly afterwards toleration and imperial

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<sup>5</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God The 4000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, (New York: Publisher Ballantine Books, 1994), 62.

<sup>6</sup> Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Allen, *The Encyclopedia...*, 108.

favors were given to Christianity. Finally, he agreed with his fellow-emperor Licinius on a policy of religious freedom enshrined in the so-called Edict of Milan. Now we got clear history about the relation between Christianity and Constantine emperor, we have known that Constantine belief previously was roman paganism, thus he did not know much about theological issues and he did not know the teaching of Jesus well, therefore the Council of Nicaea was obvious to be intervened by Constantine's idea of paganism.

Hans Leitzmann who quoted from the original book of Eusebius<sup>7</sup> said, "He (the Emperor) not only listened attentively and gave signs of his agreement or disagreement but took part in the discussions in order to guide the to the desired goal of peace".<sup>8</sup>

In another remark, he also said that the formulation of trinity as the dogma of Christianity obviously was intervened by Constantine by inserting new term of divinity which never recognized before, as the following remark, "It is quite astonishing that the Emperor should have placed great emphasis on introducing into the creed a term that hitherto neither of the parties had put forward, the term 'homousious'.<sup>9</sup>

Like the previous statement, Armstrong remarked too that the Constantine himself "intervened" and summoned a synod to Nicaea to settle the issue.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is not impossible that the influence of paganism into Christian dogma of trinity such as what Constantine did in the Nicaea Council occurred factually, Will Durant stated that, "Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it"<sup>11</sup>

In this case, we see that the goal within Constantine want to promote in this council is not to decide whether the Arius or Athanasius are the true or the false, but rather to strengthen the politic situation and to unite the Roman empire in one religion,<sup>12</sup> in such a way Athanasius and his followers serve the all kinds of ways to achieve much more follower; purposing to enable them to prevail over Arian and his followers. Finally, the notion of trinity legitimized by Roman Empire as the legal doctrine over Christianity in the whole region of Roman empire, in another word, Richard Horsley said "that

<sup>7</sup> One of the participant of the Council of Nicaea 325 C.E. he is Eusebius of Nicomedia.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Leitzmann, *From Constantine to Julian*, (London: T.P. 1955), 95.

<sup>9</sup> Leitzmann, *From...*,118-119.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, *History...*, 60.

<sup>11</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*. Vol.3, (New York: World Library, 1972), 595.

<sup>12</sup> "He had hoped that Christianity would help the unity of the Empire" John Foster, *The First Advance Church History, Vol 1*, (London: 1975), 139.

Christianity was a product of empire".<sup>13</sup>

To conclude the historical background of trinity, here are the major steps in the development of Trinitarians. Firstly, from About 150 Greek Apologists, Justin who begin to define the Word to be the Son, and then described the Word or Son as a second divine which being begotten by the Father at the time before creation, and said that the Word was the God subordination. A threefold baptismal formula was introduced, along with some vague notions of threeness in relation to God. Secondly, another concept of trinity which built by 210 Tertullian introduced the term trinity and formulated the concept of one God in three persons. In their conception, the notion of trinity means that the Father alone is eternal, and He is superior to the other two persons. Thirdly, there were about 215-30 origen likewise promoted Trinitarians, and contributed the key doctrines of the eternal Son and the eternal generation of the Son. He thereby prepared the way to elevate the status of the second person, although he himself still taught that the Father was superior to the other two persons. Fourth, under the influence of Athanasius, the Council of Nicaea in 325 rejected Arianism. It declared that the Father and the Son are of the same substance, making them equal. Fifth, The Council of Constantinople in 381 followed the doctrine of Athanasius and the Cappadocians. It clarified the status of the Holy Spirit and placed all three persons on an equal footing. Sixth, based in part on the theology of Augustine and produced sometime in the fifth to eighth centuries, the Athanasius Creed put in definitive form the doctrine of the victors of Nicaea and Constantinople. It declared the coequality, coeternity, and consubstantiality of the three persons.<sup>14</sup>

### The Trinity according to Jesus Teaching

Trinity according to Qur'anic remark was not the teaching of Jesus because since he was born in the world he did not teach anyone to worship him as God besides Allah. Based on Ibn Katsir that the first words that Isa (Jesus) at-uttered when he was still a baby in the cradle were, "I am Abdullah (the servant of Allah)." He did

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<sup>13</sup> Richard A, Horsley, *Paul and Empire Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed., (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 1.

<sup>14</sup> David K, Bernard, *A History of Christian Doctrine*. Vol. 1, (Hazelwood: Word Aflame Pr, 1995), 93.

not say, "I am Allah," or, "I am the son of Allah."<sup>15</sup> Rather, he said, verily, I am a servant of Allah, He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet.<sup>16</sup> Until he said "And verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So, worship Him (Alone). That is the straight path." He also proclaimed to them when he was a man, after he was sent as a Prophet, commanding them to worship his Lord and their Lord, alone without partners, but the Messiah said, "O, Children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Verily, whosoever sets up partners with Allah in worship; then Allah has forbidden paradise for him, and the fire will be his abode.<sup>17</sup>

The previous paragraph is clear that Qur'an mentioned that Jesus himself rejects who call him as God because his mission to the Children of Israel is to invite them to (monotheism) al-tauhid as the previous prophets proclaimed. Qur'an criticizes Christians who say that Allah is one of three in a trinity as the blasphemers or unbelievers because this statement is contradict with Jesus' statement. Quranic refutation to the divinity of Jesus or even his mother also mentioned explicitly in the last chapter of al-Maidah when the Qur'an narrated the conversation between Allah and al-Masih as the affirmation to refute the unbeliever of Christians in the Day of Resurrection who say him and his mother as two gods besides Allah.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, it is more impossible if Jesus or even his mother is considered as a part of the Trinity. Jesus replies to what Allah will ask in the day of resurrection that he did never say to people ought to except what (Allah) did command him to say and convey "Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord".<sup>19</sup>

Further the question what we like to ask about trinity, is the term of trinity has ever shown in the life of Jesus? Have the doctrine of trinity sources in the gospel? To answer the question we would like to analyze this issue through Biblical studies on Jesus teaching upon his disciples. But before that, it will be better to know about Jesus, before we discuss his teaching in the gospel. However, any attempt to find the authentic biography of Jesus it does not exist because the gospels itself has different story about Jesus life, this view is coming from the Britannica Encyclopedia which stated below, "The earliest accounts of Jesus life the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and

<sup>15</sup> Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, vol.3 (Cairo: Dar el-Hadits, 2002), 185.

<sup>16</sup> QV. Maryam [19]: 30-36.

<sup>17</sup> QV. al-Maidah [5]:72.

<sup>18</sup> QV. al-Maidah [5]:116.

<sup>19</sup> QV. al-Maidah [50]:117.

Luke and the more philosophical Gospel of John are marked by inconsistencies and differing agendas and no independent account by contemporary authors exists."<sup>20</sup>

The statement shows us that Christians have no authentic sources about the biography of Jesus's life. Therefore, it was an oddity for Christian that they claimed to have doctrine of trinity from Jesus but their scripture is not authentic telling on Jesus's life. How they can have good understanding on Jesus teaching if the source was complicated. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was born to the house of David, as foretold in Jewish scripture and messianic traditions. He was born of Mary, the wife of the carpenter Joseph.<sup>21</sup> According to Luke the birth occurred during the time of a census held by Augustus and according to Matthew during the reign of Herod the Great.<sup>22</sup> Although the chronology of the gospels is inconsistent, they do agree that Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem, in support of Jewish messianic teachings, and raised in the Galilean town of Nazareth. As we know that the community where Jesus was born was among the Jewish people, thus the tradition within Jesus life was Judaism tradition and surely Jesus him self never called what he taught was the Christian tradition. Jesus Christ claimed to have a definite relation to the history of that people among whom he was born. In his teaching, he put himself at the end of the Old Testament, and declared that he came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. Christianity, therefore, however it be explained, has a close connection with Judaism, and the religion of Jesus cannot be considered without linking to the previous religion of Judaism. This view based on The Encyclopedia of Catholicism,

"Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew; he was born a Jew; he lived as a Jew; he taught and preached as a Jew within the religious concerns of Judaism; and he died as a Jew. In short, Jesus was not a Christian. The term did not even arise until late in the first century, c. 95 C. E."<sup>23</sup>

From previous statement, we can take a point that Christianity actually, not developed by Jesus him self or even his early disciples, but Christianity was name given by Paul and Barnabas in Antioch.

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<sup>20</sup> Jacob E. Safra, *Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions*, (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, INC, 1999), 568.

<sup>21</sup> Math 1: 1-9

<sup>22</sup> Luke 2:1-7, Math 2:1

<sup>23</sup> Frank K, Flinn, *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, (New York: Fact On File, 2007), xiv.



(Acts 11. 26) Because the Gospel of Lukas said that since Jesus began his teaching in thirty years old after he was baptized by John in the Jordan river, he never gave name to his followers as Christian, on the contrary later after John Baptist put into the prison Jesus wandered the countryside from Galilee to Judea to teach the Gospel in the Temple. Where at that time there were several religious groups in Judaism during the late second temple such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes and the Zealots. The basic principle what Jesus taught to them was about the commandments, love and prayer. Let us refer to the Gospel of Mark,

And one of the scribes (the Sadducees) came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, which is the first commandment of all? 29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O, Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. 32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.<sup>24</sup>

If we noticed the mentioned verses, we can take a point that Jesus teaching indicated that he attempted to invite the people of Israel to believe in one God only; let us analyze these verses from two angles, firstly, the words "The Lord our God is one" in this word Jesus used the third possession pronoun, which includes himself in belief to one God. Further this word no implication related to the term of trinity. Trinity base on Qur'an is not the teaching of Jesus Christ because he said "O, Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord."<sup>25</sup> Belief in Trinity is rather came from the paganism or the tradition of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the even way.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, the word "with all thy mind" it indicates that we should believe God with our logic and our intellectual mind because faith is not merely by dogma of the creed but must include the whole aspects of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Therefore, in the 18th century, Some Christians began to adopt a "Unitarian" view of God. These

<sup>24</sup> Mark 12: 28-32

<sup>25</sup> QV. al-Maidah [5]: 72.

<sup>26</sup> Q.S.al-Maidah [5]: 77.

Christians denied the teaching of the trinity and taught that God is one. Other Christians admitted, that “the concept of a trinity strains logic”.<sup>27</sup> Currently let us analyze the fact of the concept of the trinity, which The Nicene Creed stated.

There is one of The Father, another of The Son, and another of The Holy Spirit. But the God head of The Father, of The Son, and of The Holy Spirit, is all one the Glory equal, the majesty coeternal. The Father is God, The Son is God and The Holy Spirit is God, and yet they are not three Gods, but one God.<sup>28</sup>

In this creed mentioned three personal substances of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, these three substances are one God. Further, if the term trinity defined as one substance this notion would contradict the Gospel that said: “I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I”.<sup>29</sup> It is rather complicated if Jesus in this verse said that Father is greater than himself while the concept of trinity said that Jesus with the father are same in one form. In another case Jesus said: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”<sup>30</sup>

Let us look at the word “sent” in this verse Jesus clearly said that He was sent by God, so how can it be the sender and whom was sent by God in the same form. Additionally, modern scholars of German critics in the middle of the 19th century explored the difference between the Aramaic world of ideas, in which Jesus and his disciples lived, and the Greek world ideas, in which Christian dogma developed, in the Encyclopedia of World Religions Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Alles pointed out about the term, son of God below:

“That in ancient Aramaic “Son of God simply meant a righteous person but in ancient Greek, however, it had special connotations which Christian later developed these connotations into the doctrine of the incarnation. The scholars claimed however, that Jesus and his followers would neither have understood nor accepted those later ideas.”<sup>31</sup>

The second Christian dogma is that Jesus Christ was the Son of God in a special and exclusive sense. This dogma also is not in conformity with the sayings and teachings of Jesus. In the Bible this

<sup>27</sup> Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Allen, *The Encyclopedia...*, 456.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-205.

<sup>29</sup> John, 14: 28.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew, 17:3.

<sup>31</sup> Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Allen, *The Encyclopedia...*, 55.

expression has been used for many earlier prophets. For instance, Israel was called the "Son of God" in one of the books of Moses, "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn."<sup>32</sup> In the Psalms the same title was given to David, "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."<sup>33</sup> A little later in the Bible Solomon also was called the Son of God, "He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever."<sup>34</sup>

This phrase meant nothing more than nearness to God in love. The founder of Christianity himself said that every man who did the will of the Father in heaven was a soil of God. It was devout life, kind and merciful behavior that made a man worthy of being called the son of God. Is this not what Jesus saying in the following sayings, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."<sup>35</sup>

These sayings leave no doubt in our minds as to what this phrase meant for Jesus. In view of this, there is no justification of regarding Jesus as the Son of God, in an exclusive or unique sense. Jesus mostly called himself a "son of man," but when he referred to himself as a "son of God", it was no doubt in the same sense in which Adam, Israel, David and Solomon had been called the sons of God before him and in which he himself had spoken of those who had love in their hearts and lived in peace with their fellowmen as "sons of God." The following remarks of Jesus will further show that it was only in a metaphorical sense that he called himself a son of God,

"Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"<sup>36</sup>

In this verse, Jesus was obviously referring to Psalms 82: verses 6 and 7, "I have said, Ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the most high. But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes." As the Judges and prophets of old were called "Gods" only in a

<sup>32</sup> Exodus, 4:22.

<sup>33</sup> Psalms, 2:7.

<sup>34</sup> I Chronicles, 22: 10.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew, 5:9.

<sup>36</sup> John, 10:34-36.

Metaphorical sense, so Jesus called himself a “Son of God” in the same sense. It is clear that for Jesus the term “Son of God” carried no particular import other than the idiom of the Bible permitted. There is no case for singling Jesus out as the Son of God in a special or literal sense, as the Christians have done.

However, what it is later so-called as the Apostles creed is one such later form. It did not achieve its present form until quite late; just how late is a matter of controversy. Further from this creed the divinity of Jesus; according to Christianity is the fundamental essence of belief which his existence cannot be separated from the dogma of the trinity. Because the root of the trinity settled Jesus as the Son of God yet, the personality of Jesus from his birth till his death on the crucifixion, and the resurrection became very important.

Starting from the crucifixion Christian built that the original sin should be redeemed by God through the crucifixion of Jesus, as the only single Son of God. However, it is important to ensure the authentication within Jesus ever say from his own lips whether he had ever claimed as the Son of God or not. To answer this question let we analyze it through the Bible what Jesus really said from his lips. According to bible, here are his own word “And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.”<sup>37</sup>

In this verse, it is clear that Jesus rejected who call him self as the good, because the only proper to be called as good is God. So, in this case it seems difficult to make a claim that the notion of trinity was the teaching of Jesus; more concern to this case the Britannica Encyclopedia remarked, that the doctrine of trinity which church formulated had mistaken.

This implied that Jesus was a man like other men but with a heightened awareness of the presence and power of God. Then the dogma of the church had mistaken this awareness for a metaphysical statement that Jesus was the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, and had thus distorted the original simplicity of his message.<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately, we might understand from the previous discussion that the doctrine of Trinity was not relevant with the teaching of Jesus or even with his disciples (*al-Hawāriyyūn*) because they witnessed as Muslims and believe that there is no God but Allah.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Mark, 10:18.

<sup>38</sup> Jacob E. Safra, *Britannica...*, 227.

<sup>39</sup> QV. al-Maidah [5]: 111. See Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir...*,259.

## The Trinity according to Paul

Doctrine of trinity as mentioned before is a deviation of the religion of Allah. Al-Qur'an warns the people of the book especially in this context are the Christians, "do not exceed the limits concerning the truth and exaggeration in praising whom you were commanded to honor. Christian exaggerated in Jesus case and elevated him from the rank of prophet to the rank of a God. Christians did this with Isa (Jesus), who was a prophet, yet Christians claimed that he is God besides Allah and they follow the vain desires of people who went astray before. This error occurred because Christians followed their teachers, the advocates of misguidance who came before their time and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the right path, deviated from the straight path, to the path of misguidance and deviation.<sup>40</sup> The question is, who the actor behind the deviation of Christian was to initiate the doctrine of trinity. Someone whom is to be suspected to lead Christians astray is Paul of Tarsus who claimed as the apostle of Jesus. He was an adequate person accused as the actor who deceived Christians to take Jesus as God or Son of God because of his letters.<sup>41</sup> He was also a people who abrogated the law of Torah,<sup>42</sup> he prohibited the allowed for Christians and allowed the prohibited. The phenomenon of Paul who claimed Jesus as Good and abrogated the law of Torah is in accord with the following chapter of the Qur'an'

...The Christians say, "The Messiah is the Son of Allah." That is their saying with their mouths, resembling, (imitating), the saying of those who disbelieved aforetime,... They took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah, and the Messiah, son of Maryam<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> QV. al-Madah [5]: 77.

<sup>41</sup> His letter to Philippi indicated Paul said that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Look at the Gospel on Philippians, 2:5-11; Another indication that Paul said Jesus as The Son of God is mentioned in his letter to Corinthians. He said: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Look at the Gospel on I Corinthians 1:9.

<sup>42</sup> Look at Rome, 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. The example of the abrogation of the Torah law is, he allowed to eat swine or whatever meat of animals, and he abrogated circumcision for Christians. Look at his letter on Corinthian, 10: 25-26. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: 26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. Look his letter on Galatians, 5:6 "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

<sup>43</sup> QV.al-Taubah [9]: 30-31.

Paul is the most important people after Jesus in Christianity, many Christian scholars regard him as the great missionary in the early Century of Christianity. Henceforth, let us try to analyze the doctrine of trinity from the teaching of Paul who has much influence with the principle teaching of Christianity, however it will be better to know the personality of Paul before we go farther to his teaching.

Paul in (Greek) also called Saul in (Hebrew) he was born in the town of Tarsus now in southern Turkey. From his letters it is clear that he had a good education in Greek. He was also an extremely observant Jew. According to Acts, he received training as a Rabbi in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. Like most rabbis, he supported himself with a trade, tent making; he became known rather as an opponent and even persecutor of the Christian movement.<sup>44</sup> The Britannica Encyclopedia also stated that, "it is clear that Paul never met Jesus."<sup>45</sup>

The Gospel of Act narrated that Paul begin to spread Christianity after his appearance of a light on his journey to Damascus. However there were complicated history about this appearance; because the men who journeyed with him according to the gospel verses have different testimony; according to (Act 9: 7), "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man," while in (Act 22:9) "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spoke to me."

From these two different verses above, it is rather problematic to make valid decision because the history was contradiction than we can not make sure whether this history is true or false, because there is no authentic evidence in order to take for granted Paul's claim,

The appearance that Paul claimed has made many comments among the historian and religion scholars, for Nietzsche he stated that Paul suffered "hallucination," during his journey to Damascus.<sup>46</sup> While in Encyclopedia of Britannica what happened with Paul has many interpretations in such this statement, "Variously interpreted to mean epilepsy, malarial fever, erysipelas, or ophthalmic, was certainly a recurring illness."<sup>47</sup>

Another scholar said that Paul suffered from Trachoma, as we know that Paul on his journey to Damascus could not see for

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<sup>44</sup> Act, 22: 3-5.

<sup>45</sup> Jacob E. Safra, *Britannica...*, 846.

<sup>46</sup> Gager, John G, *Reinventing Paul*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). 4.

<sup>47</sup> Jacob E. Safra, *Britannica...*, 472. See response to this way of thinking is offered by Saged Meir, *Study the Case of Christianity*, (Riyadh, Dar-El-Salam, 2002), 44.

the glory of the light, then he was being led by the hand of them that were with him, then he came into Damascus. Further Ananias brought Paul to his home and treated him by holding his eyes. This story mentioned in the following verse, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."<sup>48</sup>

The phenomena above indicated that the personality of Paul was very complicated among the scholars. But whatever what scholars said about him, the Christians believe that Paul was the apostle of Christ. Ironically Jesus himself never regarded Paul as his twelve disciples or even his apostles, on the contrary by his own admission, Paul claimed that he was the Apostle of Jesus Christ.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, he did not care a rush with the apostles before him whether to learn or to understand the teaching of Jesus in Jerusalem, on the contrary he went to Arabian, and he just coming to Jerusalem after three years later. Therefore, the people rejected him in the early time of his teaching. Ultimately whatever a claim about Paul's teaching he never learned it from the twelve disciples or even from Jesus directly. Further what it is became odd was that such this phenomenon within Paul underwent only happened in one time during his life, then how could Paul got such as a teaching from Jesus whereas Paul never meet him or even if he met Jesus through an appearance, but this was only occurred one time during his life. In addition what Paul teach in the beginning of his mission was rejected many Jews because he taught the people different way of it make contradict the law of Torah which many Jews believe and practice. Look at the Gospel below,

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, men of Israel, help, this is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place, and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.<sup>50</sup>

From this verse it is clear how Paul opposed the teaching of Jesus to keep the law of Torah which we have discussed before that Jesus coming not to abolish the law of Moses. Currently, let us begin

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<sup>48</sup> Acts, 9:18.

<sup>49</sup> Rome, 1: 1; 1 Corinthians, 1: 1.

<sup>50</sup> Act, 21: 27; 2:8.

to analyze the teaching of Paul within it is later has relation with the teaching of trinity. According to the letters of Paul we found that Paul has many teaching about the notion of trinity, the following verse told us how Paul built the notion of trinity.

“In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”<sup>51</sup>

These verses clearly gave us indication that Paul attempt to invite people to admit Jesus as God. Therefore he claimed that he was the servant of Jesus. Another teaching that Paul brought into Christianity is that by the sin of Adam all human being has fallen into the same sin as Adam did, therefore God sent his Son to save all human being by the death of Jesus on the cross as the redemption for all human being. Paul mentioned in his letter to Roman that all human being has fallen into original sin because one sin, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”<sup>52</sup>

Even though Paul built the basic of trinity on the death of Christ and on his resurrection to save all human being from the original sin, but many scholars feel that Paul’s teachings about Christ’s death and resurrection resemble the myths attached to hellenistic mystery cults.<sup>53</sup> This argument is quite reasonable, because Paul absorbed many Greek philosophical teachings that almost close to paganism. Let us see to the statement below,

The new idea came from popular “mystery cult” religions that abounded in the Mediterranean lands. The “mystery” applied to a mystical, symbolic union with a God who lived in human form, died, but came to life again...there were a number of mystery cults with different gods. But all of them emphasizing the salvation resulting from dedication to a dying-rising Lord. It is interesting that the word’ Kyrios (lord) which the Greeks applied to dying-rising God, was used by Paul to Jesus.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> II Corinthians, 4: 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Rome, 5:19.

<sup>53</sup> Ackermann, Marsha E, *Encyclopedia of World History*, ed., (New York: Facts on File, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Floyd H. Ross and Tynette Hills, *The Great Religions by which men Live*, (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1990), 137.



In addition, that the notion of original sin it was contradiction with the teaching of Jesus. Let me here to show how Jesus teach his disciples about the kingdom of heaven, once upon a time the disciples asked him about who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Then Jesus said unto them that people should be like a little child to achieve the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Because little children were born in this world without original sin.<sup>55</sup>

This verse indicated how Jesus argued the people should to convert and become as little children to achieve the greatest of the kingdom of heaven. In this case Jesus never talk that people has original sin therefore he takes a little children as an example that every people was born to this world without original sin, because what Adam and Eva did it was their own fault and God has forgiven them. Therefore, people should repent their own mistake because God judge the people according to his work. Let we look what the Bible said, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds."<sup>56</sup> Not only in this verse, but the old Testament also said that God judge people according to his work. "Also unto thee, O, Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest to every man according to his work."<sup>57</sup> Therefore, if we compare this verses with the teaching of Paul teach that all human being fell into original sin, we tend to say that the teaching of Jesus is more logic, and relevant with the mercy of God to all human being than what Paul taught.

Further we should back to notice the idea of trinity within Paul brought, whether the teaching of Paul was consistent with the teaching of Jesus or not. As we know that Jesus was often to assert to his disciples that, the first commandment for all people of Israel is to know that The Lord our God is one.<sup>58</sup> By comparing the teaching of Jesus and Paul on the previous discussion, we can take an assumption that the teaching of trinity was not come from Jesus but just coming latter by Paul and after. Therefore, what we know about the teaching of Christian in the notion of trinity since the death of Jesus is a kind of heresy toward original teaching of Jesus itself. As result many scholars have a view point that Christian actually was not the teaching

<sup>55</sup> Matthew, 18: 1-4.

<sup>56</sup> Rome, 2:5-6.

<sup>57</sup> Psalms, 62:12.

<sup>58</sup> Mark, 12. 29.

of Jesus but they tend to say that it was Paul teaching. This argument depends on what Wright said below,

Paul succeeded only in producing a Jesus who was the product of his own peculiar religion and his philosophical imagination, a figure who bore no relation to Jesus himself and who belonged in the world of Greek religion, a cult-God.<sup>59</sup>

The statement within Wright said above it seems realistic, because the facts proved us that Paul was enthusiastic spreading the Christianity not only among the people of Israel but until Asian minor. This struggle appears not only in his journey around Asian minor but the way he invites the people was very extreme. He served all way just like the hypocrite in order to achieve what he want to get benefit from his work.<sup>60</sup> Now we understand how the Paul thought and how the Paul attitude contribute the Christian teaching. Ultimately, Wright said that, 'Paul was the real founder of Christianity', using Hellenistic categories to interpret what in his somewhat muddled but enthusiastic way, he supposed the meaning of Jesus might be.<sup>61</sup>

### Discourse of Trinity among the Christian Sects

The discourse of trinity among the Christian sects has begun since the era of both Arianism and Athanasius dispute on Jesus status. The fundamental discourse of this debate was set on the basic principle of the divinity of Jesus. Arianism viewed that Jesus was only creation such as other human being while Athanasius viewed that Jesus was in the same substance with the father. Further the Nicaea Council in 325 C.E. tried to solve this problem. However, it did not mean that the dispute of the concept of trinity was end in that rest. As result after this council there were many branches of Christianity emerged in the past time such as sects as Monarchite, Jacobite and Nestorite,<sup>62</sup> the conflicts which occurred among the Christian sects

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<sup>59</sup> Wright, N. T. *What Saint Paul really said: was Paul of Tarsus the real Founder of Christianity*, (Michigan: Forward Movement publications, 1997), 22.

<sup>60</sup> I Corinth, 9: 20-23.

<sup>61</sup> Wright N.T, *What Saint...*, 23.

<sup>62</sup> Ibnu Katsir said that all of these sects according to Ibn Jarir believe in trinity though differ each other in their understanding and even to judge each other as unbeliever, although the truth is that the three are infidel. See. Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsîr*

was mentioned in the following verse of the Qur'an,

"From those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a covenant, but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them, so we estranged them, with enmity and hatred between the one and the other, to the day of judgment. And soon will Allah show them what it is they have done."<sup>63</sup>

Conflict among Christian sects are increasing year by year and even to tens or even to hundreds sects due to differences of things either theological or other issues. Indeed, the numerous Christian sects have always been enemies and adversaries of each other, accusing each other of heresy and cursing each other. Each sect among them excommunicates the other sects and does not allow them entrance to their places of worship. The Monarchist sect accuses the Jacobite sect of heresy, and such is the case with the Nestorians and the Arians. Each sect among them will continue to accuse the other of disbelief and heresy in this life and on the day when the witnesses will come forth. In the reformation era, there were many more branches of Christianity. Some of the most essential branches within Christian sects has difference theological understanding of trinity to day, those are:

*First, Eastern Orthodox.* The word "orthodox" means "having the proper opinions of beliefs." The Eastern Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe and Western Asia arose from a split between the western Catholic Church and the churches of the Byzantine Empire in 1054 C.E.<sup>64</sup> This split was caused by differences in the churches views of the holy trinity. Westerners believed that the holy spirit proceeds from both God the Father and God the Son. Whereas the eastern churches saw the holy spirit as proceeding only from the Father. Orthodox theologians talk instead about the divinization of humanity. In their eyes, human beings were made for communion with God. Indeed, human beings find their fulfillment in the divine. The incarnation and especially the resurrection of Jesus testify to that fulfillment, despite the obstacles that life in the world presents.

Some branches of Eastern Orthodox such as the Oriental Orthodox churches, which include the Armenian Church as well as

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*al-Qur'an al-Az'im*, Jilid II, (Cairo: Dar el-Hadits, 2002), 186.

<sup>63</sup> QV. al-Maidah [5]: 14.

<sup>64</sup> Philip, Wilkinson, *Eyewitness Companions Religions*, (New York: DK Publishing, 2008), 106.

the Coptic Church they share the view that Christ has one nature, that his human and divine aspects are inseparable. In this case, we could understand that the absence of clear definition about the notion of trinity from the Bible and Jesus teaching, has contributed many differences and controversies.

*Second, Roman Catholicism.* Roman Catholicism is one of the three main branches of Christianity. The word “catholic” means universal.<sup>65</sup> Roman Catholicism is universal in two senses. It extends around the globe, and more important, it sees itself as the proper bearer of the universal Christian tradition. It is called Roman because it considers the bishops of Rome to be the supreme leader of Christianity which called as The Pope.

Catholicism asserted that the truths of Christianity as formulated not only in the ancient creeds and councils but also in all councils of Catholic bishops and in pronouncements of the pope. They maintain that God is a trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human. In formulating the truths of Christianity, they have tended to use different terms than Orthodox Christians. The Orthodox churches have tended to talk about human beings becoming sacred or divine. Catholic thinkers have tended to the more legal language of original sin, atonement, and redemption.

*Second, Unitarian.* Unitarian ideas began to emerge during the reformation in 16<sup>th</sup> century, in Poland, Hungary, and England. Early Unitarians were inspired by the Spanish theologian Michael Servetus. Unitarians believe in one God, but not in the holy trinity their religion is typified by a search for truth based more in human experience than in religious dogma.<sup>66</sup> In the early of reformation many people began questioning the doctrines of the trinity, the deity of Christ, and the Atonement. At first, the anti-trinitarians subordinated Jesus to the Father, but soon they concluded that Jesus is not God at all but only a prophet. They viewed His death not as a substitutionary sacrifice but merely an expression of God’s forgiving love. Another rejection of the notion of trinity also came from the Christadelphians one of the modern sect in Christianity. The name Christadelphians derives from the Greek, meaning “Christ’s brothers,” and was chosen to reflect the desire of the church’s founder, John Thomas, to return to the faith

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<sup>65</sup> Robert S. Elwood and Gregory D. Allen, *The Encyclopedia...*, 392.

<sup>66</sup> Philip Wilkinson, *Eyewitness...*, 119.

of Jesus's Christadelphians follow Jesus's teachings, although they reject the dogma of the holy trinity; God the Father, God the son, and God The Holy Spirit.

The elaboration of some Christian sects above is the real example of the phenomenon of how the Christians sects differ each other on their understanding of the doctrine of trinity since the Council of Nicaea 325 C.E. has begun to formulate the notion of trinity as the official doctrine among the Christians.

## Conclusion

Analyzing the explanation above, we conclude that the dogma of trinity based on historical criticism is an theological delusion and a product of the political power of Constantine, the Emperor of the Roman empire in the Nicaea Council 325 A.C. Trinity as the Christians faith was influenced by polytheism and paganism of the Hellenism Philosophy which Paul inserted into Christianity to deviate the purity of Jesus teaching on monotheism.

The dogma of trinity although it is determined as the official belief of Christians dogma but it is also the source of conflict among the Christians sects because the word "trinity" however, never appears in the Bible definition. As result Christianity is the complicated religion which has no basic theology as the core faith.

Based on previous elaboration it is clear that doctrine of trinity is in contradiction with the real teaching of Prophet Isa al-Masih (Jesus Christ) and his disciples (*al-Hawāriyyūn*) because according to Qur'anic and Blibical studies, Jesus believes in the monotheism of God and he commanded his disciples and the People of Israel to believe in one God as what as the Muslims to day believe.[]

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