

Headship within the Godhead?

What the functional hierarchy group believe!

Quote: "There is a functional hierarchy within the Trinity ([1 Corinthians 11:3](#)). The Son submits to the Father, and the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and the Son. This functional submission does not imply an equivalent inferiority of essence; all three Persons are equally God, but they differ in their function. Likewise, men and women are equally human beings and equally share the image of God, but they have God-ordained roles and functions that mirror the functional hierarchy within the Trinity."

What the above quote is saying is that a functional hierarchy exist within the trinity. This belief is taken from 1 Corinthians 11:3 where the scripture has been wrestled with to put it in a functional hierarchy.

Is there a functional hierarchy within the trinity?

There is no definition of the trinity in the bible but God has given us a natural visual aid of Himself in the Ark of the Covenant so that we can understand the trinity. How can you understand a heavenly reality? You must look first at the natural. They say that a picture paints a thousand words. I believe this to be the reason why God gave us a visual aid rather a definition.

The Ark of the Covenant



The most important item of furniture in the tabernacle was the ARK. It was upon the ARK that the Shekinah glory would dwell in the holy of holies. Without the Ark everything in the tabernacle would be dead. The Ark consisted of:

A chest board
A mercy seat placed on top of it.

God was quite specific when He gave Moses the pattern how to build the mercy seat. The mercy seat was made of ONE piece of gold fashioned into three figures: two Cherubs and a blood stained mercy seat.

Exodus 37:6-8

- 6 .And he made the mercy seat of **pure gold**: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.
- 7 And he made two cherubim of gold, beaten out of **one piece** made he them on the two ends of the mercy seat;
- 8 One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: **out of the mercy seat made he the cherubim on the two ends thereof.**

We know that blood stained mercy seat represents the Son (Romans 3:25); it was there that the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement by the high priest. But who are the two cherubim? They can't be angels; angels cannot be ONE with God. In Hebrews Paul refers to them as Cherubim of Glory. The mercy seat was made out of pure gold. Pure gold speaks of deity. This is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

ONE piece: One being

Three persons: three persons in the Godhead

Being and persons is not the same thing which means this is not a contradiction.

Being- the essence that makes something what it is .For example, there are celestial beings, there are human beings, and there is one divine being. The being of God is what makes God, God. He is omnipotent omnipresent all powerful

Person-the essence that makes someone who he is. The personality of someone. Not one person is alike, every person has a different personality. Within my one being is one person.

Within the **one** being of God are three persons. God is a being in communion within Himself. He is relational. You can't say that God is love unless there is a lover, a beloved and the Spirit of love between them. The three persons are co-equal and co eternal. What does this tell me about God?

My definition of the trinity

One personal God

One personal God. But He can work and function in three different ways at the same time: the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Schema

The Schema 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE Lord' (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Hebrew for ONE is ecad .It appears in the Torah 387 times. 93% the word is used for the numeric number 1. When you say 1, 2, 3, you would say echad for the absolute number 1.

3 in 1: In the ONE BEING, there are three persons.

1 in 3: ONE BEING but the three persons are all sharing the **same one** being.

Because the three persons of the Godhead are all sharing the **same one being**, I can say God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

This is what makes Christianity so unique compared to other religions. The triune God is a personal God. He is relational. He wants to be known. That's the nature of love. Christianity is an encounter with a personal God who has so ravished your heart that now you want to live radically for Him.

Circular structure not a hierarchical structure



The mercy seat

The mercy seat unlike the chessboard was made of PURE gold. Gold speaking of divinity. Here we have the three persons of the Godhead in **their divinity**. The three persons in the Godhead are in a circular structure with the Father and the Holy Spirit forming 2/3 of the circle. The Son completes the circle but because He had been slain with blood sprinkled upon Him, He is seen as laying down. This posture speaks of the depth of His suffering.

A circular structure is not a picture of hierarchal submission but rather one of mutual submission and mutual authority. **God cannot be inferior to God**. Not just in being but also as to role and function. One function is not above the other. The mercy seat is in a circular structure because you will need to have THREE beings each with a separate WILL to have a hierarchy structure: with the Son submitting his will to the Father and the Holy Spirit submitting his will to the Son.

The three persons **co-led together** sharing the ONE being: each performing a different function at the same time but in mutual submission to one another and mutual authority. We see this co-leadership in the creation of man. **Let us** make man in our image, after our likeness. They co-led again in the incarnation, in the death and the resurrection.

The Two Cherubim of glory

How do the 24 elders around the throne show their reverent submission to God! They bow before him. How do flying creatures show their reverent submission to God? In Isaiah 6 we see the seraphim with six wings: with 2 they cover their feet, with 2 they cover their eyes, with 2 they fly. The seraphim covers their feet and they cover their faces to show their reverent submission to God.

Likewise Ezekiel sees the Cherubim's with four wings: two wings of everyone were joined one to another with which they covered their heads and faces, as did Isaiah's seraphim and two wings covered their bodies.

Seraphim and Cherubim because of their proximity to the throne and their supernatural ability to gaze into the depths of God, their faces reveal the four dimensions of the beauty of God.

Four faces of the beauty of God

The face of a cherub (Ezekiel 10:14)

The face of a man,
The face of a lion,
The face of an eagle.

The face of an ox and a cherub are the same (Ezekiel 10:22, 1:10). The ox and a cherub are both symbols of servant hood and humility.

In Ezekiel temple, the entire interior walls of the sanctuary are decorated with a palm tree between two Cherubim, one with the face of a man, the other with the face of a lion. Psalm tree is a symbol of conquest. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah (face of a lion), the root of David (the face of a man), who has prevailed. In Ezekiel temple God is revealing the glory of His Son through the face of a Cherubim

Likewise in the mercy seat the Father is revealing His glory to us through the face of a Cherubim.

How can we understand a heavenly reality! God has chosen the visual aids of two Cherubim, things that we are familiar with to reveal to us what He is like. Seraphim and Cherubim because of their closeness to the throne, they are the only living creatures that can reflect the glory of God to its full measure. Again, in Hebrews Paul refers to them as Cherubim of Glory. The mercy seat was made out of ONE piece of pure gold. Pure gold speaks of deity. This is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Angels cannot be ONE with God.

Posture of the Holy Spirit

Look at the posture of the Holy Spirit, His head is bowed down in humility and His face is covered. This is how flying creatures show their reverent submission! With their head bowed down and their face covered.

Posture of the Father

Look at the posture of the Father. The head of the Father is also bowed down in humility and His face is covered. In fact one cannot differentiate which one is the Father and which one is the Holy Spirit. Both Cherubim are in **similar posture**.

The face of a Cherub reveals what biblical Servant hood looks like

The four faces of a Cherubim reveals four facets of the beauty of God. The face of a lion is a symbol of kingship and majesty. The face of a man: when God said let us make man in our own image, it implies that God can become incarnate and take on human flesh. The face of an eagle: the eagle is a symbol of a conqueror.

But the face of a cherub is a symbol of servant hood and humility. This is how servant hood looks like in the Godhead. The Father does not use His function as director to claim authority over. His position of directorship is not about status or importance but it is to provide a **flow** within the godhead.

The Father is in mutual submission and mutual authority to the other persons in the Godhead. Each person of the godhead leads in their different functions but no one function is **over** the other.