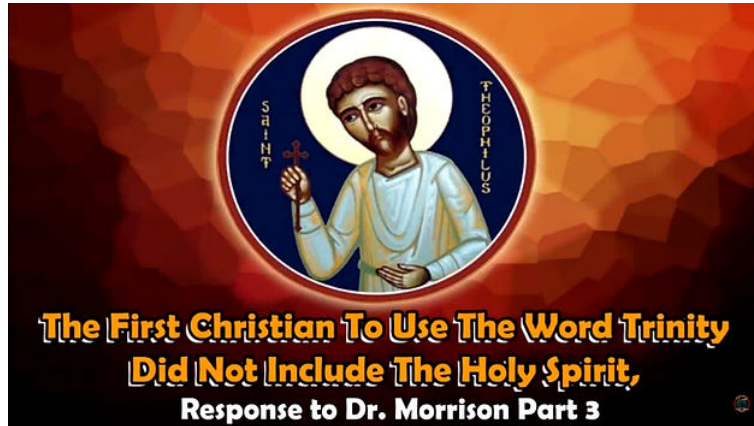




## GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

A Defense of the Apostolic  
Christian Faith

### The First Christian To Use The Word Trinity Did Not Include The Holy Spirit, Response to Dr. Morrison Part 3



At 6:42 into Mr. Morrison's Part 2 lecture on church history (*EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY PART 2, THE TRINITY DOCTRINE TAUGHT LONG BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA IN 325 AD – Steve Morrison, YouTube Video - [https://youtu.be/3zwmTjNBS\\_o](https://youtu.be/3zwmTjNBS_o)*), Mr. Morrison said that Theophilus of Antioch was the first person to use the word Trinity (in about 180 AD). However, Mr. Morrison neglected to inform his audience that Theophilus never used the words "three persons" like Tertullian did later and that he defined his idea of a "Trinity" as the "Father, Wisdom, and Word" rather than the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Theophilus wrote, "In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the Trinity, **of God, and His Word, and His wisdom**. And the fourth is the type of man, who needs light, that so there may be God, the Word, wisdom, man (*Theophilus of Antioch. To Autolycus, Book 2, Chapter XI. Translated by Marcus Dods, A.M. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition Copyright © 2004 by K. Knight.*)"

Here we can see that Theophilus did not teach that the Holy Spirit was a part of a Trinity. He wrote that "God, and His word, and His wisdom" was a Trinity. Rather than believing that the Holy Spirit is a third person of a Trinity, Theophilus wrote of the Holy Spirit as the Father's breath: "...if I say He is Spirit, I speak of His breath..." (*Theophilus of Antioch. To Autolycus, Book 1, Chapters III, V. Translated by Marcus Dods, A.M. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition Copyright © 2004 by K. Knight.*) By affirming that the Spirit of God is "His breath," Theophilus could not have believed that the Holy Spirit is a distinct divine person. Theophilus never wrote about the Holy Spirit as a person, nor did he ever mention the Holy Spirit as part of his Triadic belief.

Theophilus wrote, "God then, having his own Word internal, within His own bowels begot him, emitting him along with wisdom before all things. He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by him he made all things." (*Apology to Autolycus, Book 2, 10*)

We can clearly see that Theophilus taught that God the Father "begot him" (the Son) by "emitting him along with wisdom before all things". Here we can see that Theophilus was a Semi-Arian rather than a Trinitarian because he believed that the Son was literally "emitted" and "birthed" by the Father "along with wisdom before all (created) things".

Theophilus clarified what he meant about the word being begotten or emitted before all things in his Apology to Autolycus, book 2, 22:

"... as truth expounds, the Word, that always exists, residing within the heart of God. For before anything came into being he had him as a counsellor, **being his own mind and thought**. But when God wished to make all that he determined on, **he begot His Word, uttered the firstborn of all creation** ..." (*Apology to Autolycus, Book 2, 22*)

To Theophilus, the Word (logos) was the Father's own internal mind and thought. Thus, the Father had the Son as his counsellor internally as the Father's expressed thought (the meaning of logos/word). Oneness Modalistic theologians agree that the Son existed in the heart of God as the Father's own Mind and Thought. Yet both Oneness and Trinitarian theologians cannot agree with Theophilus when he wrote,

"But when God wished to make all that he determined on, he begot (gave birth to) His Word, uttered the firstborn of all creation."

Theophilus believed like modern Jehovah's Witnesses in that the human son pre-existed as a created being with no timeless existence. Yet Mr. Morrison insists that Theophilus of Antioch was a true Trinitarian. Nothing could be further from the truth!

*Under "Arianism," the New Advent Encyclopedia explains the theology of the Semi-Arians: "... while they affirmed the Word of God to be everlasting, they imagined Him as having become the Son to create the worlds and redeem mankind ... Five ante-Nicene Fathers are especially quoted: Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus, and Novatian, whose language appears to involve a peculiar notion of Sonship, as though it did not come into being or were not perfect until the dawn of creation."*

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