

# THE TRINITY

Christ Church

Week 5

Sunday School

THERE IS ONLY  
ONE GOD

3 CO-EQUAL  
PERSONS

3 CO-ETERNAL  
PERSONS

## Every Theological Heresy Begins With a Misconception of God

### THERE ARE THREE BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS TO THE TRINITY

#### 1. THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:  
Deuteronomy 6:4

#### 2. THERE ARE THREE DIVINE PERSONS

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing  
them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Ghost:  
Matthew 28:19

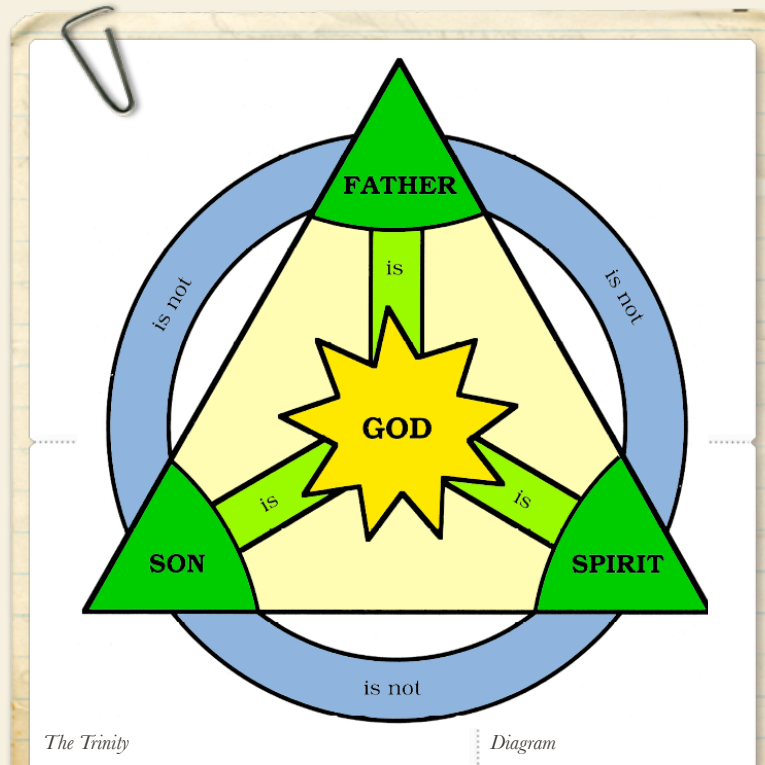
#### 3. THE PERSONS ARE COEQUAL AND COETERNAL

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine  
own self with the glory which I had with thee  
before the world was.  
John 17:5

*“The Gospel is the means by which the Father, in  
eternal love and mercy, saves men through the redeeming  
work of the Son, Jesus Christ, and draws them to himself  
by the power and regenerating work of the Spirit. The  
Gospel, as it is proclaimed in Scripture, is Trinitarian.  
Remove the Father and you have no Gospel. Remove the  
Son, and the Gospel ceases to exist. Remove the Spirit, and  
the Gospel has no existence. There is no separating the  
work of the triune God in salvation from the truth of the  
Trinity itself.” - James White*

The Trinity:

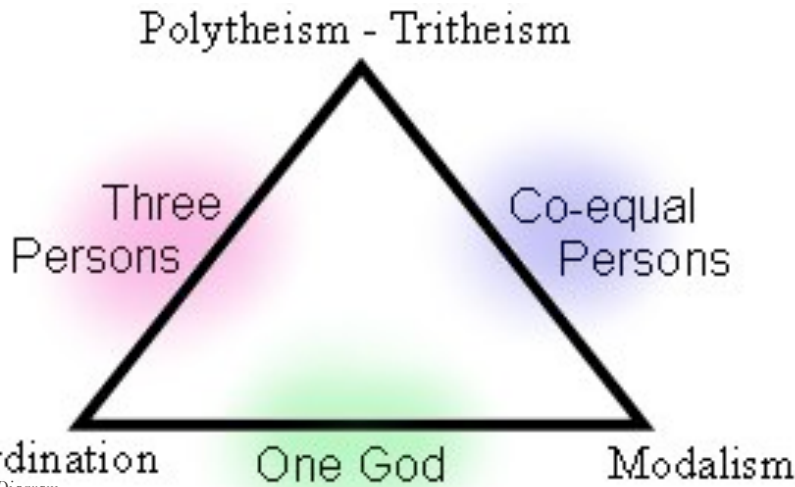
In the one being of  
God, there are three  
co-equal, co-eternal  
persons, namely the  
Father, the Son, and  
the Holy Spirit



The Trinity

Diagram

The Father is God,  
The Son is God,  
The Holy Spirit is God,  
The Father is not the Son  
The Son is not the Spirit



The Bible Teaches the Trinity

## THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF THE TRINITY

### THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

The Bible is the source of the revelation of the Trinity. The Bible presents three foundations which point to God's existence as a Trinity. First, the Old and New Testament are emphatic about the existence of only one God. Many who deny the Trinity attempt to undercut this belief by saying that Christians believe in three gods. However, this is not the case. There is only one God. Christianity has never affirmed anything else.

### THE FATHER IS GOD

There is a wealth of Scripture which testifies to the fact that the Father is God. So much so that we need not go to great lengths to prove as much. It will suffice to say that Jesus spoke regularly about God the Father.

*"before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."* Isaiah 43:10

### THE SON IS GOD

The New Testament repeatedly uses language of Jesus Christ that could never be used of any created being. For example:

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* - John 1:1

*"And Thomas answered and said unto him [Jesus], My Lord and my God."* - John 20:28

*"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."* - Romans 5:9

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The Bible also clearly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit (who is a person, not a thing) is God.

*"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."* - Acts 5:3-4

*"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."* - John 15:26

The 3 sides of the triangle diagram above demonstrate the three foundations of the trinity. Removing any one of the lines (one God, three persons, or co-equal persons) leaves two lines of the triangle which point to a specific heresy regarding the nature

**Polytheism** = belief in more than one God.

**Subordination** = Jesus is divine to a lesser extent than the Father

**Modalism** = The Father became the Son, who then became the Holy Spirit.

# Is the Trinity Biblical?

## THERE IS ONE GOD REVEALED IN THREE CO-EQUAL, CO-ETERNAL PERSONS

Why is the doctrine of the Trinity so important? "To know Christ truly is to know the Trinity, for God has not revealed himself in such a way as to allow us to have true and balanced knowledge of the Father outside of such knowledge of the Son, all of which comes to us through the Spirit. A person who wants to 'know Jesus' must, due to the nature of God's revelation, know Him as He is related to the Father and the Spirit."

Without understanding Jesus as the eternal Son, man cannot have relationship with the Father. *"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."* - 1 John 2:23.

### THE DEITY OF CHRIST

In the Old Testament, God made specific statements about His uniqueness. Over and over again, He affirmed that there is only one true God. Yet, in the New Testament, Jesus and the Apostles take those Old Testament passages that speak of Yahweh alone and apply them to Jesus.

In Hebrews 1:8, the writer quotes Psalm 45:6-7 and applies the passage to Jesus, showing the supremacy of Christ. Hebrews 1:8 says, *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."* Notice that the Son is called God by the Father.

In Isaiah 41:4 and 44:6, Yahweh alone claims to be the first and the last, the only true God. Yet, we see Jesus making the same claim in Revelation 21:6 and 22:3.

Isaiah 43:11 says, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." Yet, Jesus clearly claims to be the Savior in the New Testament.

Jesus used the phrase "I AM" of Himself, showing that He is Yahweh of the Old Testament. Seven times Jesus uses the same Greek phrase (ego eimi) of Himself in John, which is the same Greek phrase Yahweh uses of Himself in Isaiah 41:4, 43:10, 43:13, 43:25, 46:4, and 48:12.

The first century Jews who heard Jesus' claims completely understood that Jesus was claiming to be God in human flesh. John 5:18 says, *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."*

If there is still any doubt that Jesus is God, John tells us that when Isaiah saw "The Lord High and lifted up and his robe filled the temple" in Isa. 6, he was seeing the Son of God sitting on the throne. John 12:41 says, *"These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him [Jesus]."*

### THREE PERSONS

The Bible is abundantly clear that Jesus is indeed the one true God. However, the Bible is also clear that the Father and the Son are not the same person. Matthew 3:16-17 says, *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven,*

*saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Notice that you have the presence of all three persons of the Trinity in one place at one time. The Son is baptized, The Spirit descends like a dove, and The Father speaks from Heaven. The Son does not speak and the Father is not descending like a dove. Jesus and the Father are also distinguished at the Mount of Transfiguration when the Father speaks again from Heaven.

Also, John 12:28 shows a distinction between the Father and Son. Jesus says, *"Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

Over and over again, we see the Son praying to the Father and we hear Jesus saying things that can only make sense if the Father and Son are eternally distinct from one another. *"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."* John 17:5

Finally, we see Jesus telling His disciples they are to baptize in the NAME (singular not plural) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, showing the three persons in one being of God.

We have already seen verses pointing to the deity and personhood of the Spirit on the previous page. Therefore, the weight of the biblical evidence is clear.

In the one being of God, there exists three co-equal, co-eternal, persons namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



## Common Objections

### TO THE BIBLE'S TEACHING OF THE TRINITY

#### "HE WHO HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN THE FATHER..." JOHN 14:9-10

Is Jesus saying that He IS the Father here? How could He actually be the Father if He is the Son? It may help to quote the entire passage. *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

Jesus' words here do not make Him the Father, they show the complete unity and eternal relationship between the Father and Son. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus.

#### "I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE" JOHN 10:30

This is by far the most quoted passage by those attempting to deny the doctrine of the Trinity. What so many do not understand is made

perfectly clear in the actual Greek text. The word "are" in the sentence "I and the Father are one," is a first person plural, which means Jesus said, "I and the Father, *WE* are one."

Jesus is specifically speaking about a unity of purpose in the redemption of His sheep here. The context bears this out.

*"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."* John 10:28-30

The Trinity is one of the core doctrines of the Christian faith. To knowingly deny the Bible's teaching on the subject is to reject the revelation of God and worship a god of one's own making.

Go back and take a look at the triangle diagram on page 2. Denying

any of the foundations of the Trinity leads into heresy.

Mormonism denies there is only one God, therefore they are led into polytheism - the belief there are many gods.

Jehovah's Witnesses deny there are co-equal persons in the one God. Therefore, they believe in subordination - that Jesus is a "lesser" God than the one God, Jehovah.

Oneness Pentecostals deny that there are three persons in the one God, which leads them into the heresy of Modalism - the belief that the Father became the Son, who became the Holy Spirit.

It is important that we know what we believe and we know why we believe it. We are Trinitarians, not because of Church councils, or traditions. We are Trinitarian because the Bible teaches it.



Three Distinct Persons at Jesus' Baptism



Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

1. Read Philippians 2:5-11 Explain verse 6 in your own words.

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2. When do you think Jesus existed in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God?

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3. What does it mean that Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (v. 7) Pay close attention to "He made Himself..."

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4. The context of this passage has to do with believers showing humility and serving others. (verse 3-4). How does the truth of verses 5-7 cause the believer to be humble and serve others?

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5. Read Philippians 2:9-11 again. To whom will every knee bow and every tongue confess?

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6. Now Read Isaiah 45:23. To whom will every knee bow and every tongue confess?

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4. Read Colossians 1:15-17. In verse 16, Jesus is described in very precise language. What work does Paul ascribe to Jesus here?

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5. In Colossians 1:17, Paul says that it is by Christ that all things consist. The Greek word translated "consist" means to "hold together in place." What is Paul saying about Jesus here?

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6. Take some time in class and discuss what "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" means.

7. Read John 15:26. According to Jesus, is the Holy Spirit a "thing," an invisible force, or a person?

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8. According to John 15:26, What will the Spirit do when He comes?

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