

## THE TRIUNE GODHEAD

The God of the Bible, has always existed as three Persons while still being one God. We need to understand that God is love because He is a Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is central to Christianity. Knowing God is the heart of what it means to be a Christian. The more you come to know God, the more you will love Him (1 John 4:19).

### GETTING OUR TERMS RIGHT

There are two words: Godhead and Trinity. Godhead appears in the KJV three times (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9) and the ASV twice (Acts 17:29; Col. 2:9). In these passages, Godhead means an all-encompassing "Godhood," which basically refers to that which makes God, God. The divine essence is the three divine personalities; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (e.g. Matt 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:2; Jude 20-21). The word Trinity is not found in the Bible. Trinity means "tri-unity," and is derived from the Latin word *trinas*, meaning "threefold." Trinity means there is one God in three Persons. The three Persons of the Godhead are distinct Persons yet fully God in essence and nature.

### NOT JUST STRANGER THAN FICTION

Trinity like an egg; there are three parts - yolk, shell, and white - but together they comprise one egg." Trinity is like a three-leaf clover - three leaves, one plant." Trinity is like 3-in-1 shampoo - three products, one substance." Comparing God to the three leaves of a clover or the three parts of an egg is dangerous because each part is not fully the clover or egg, but each member of the Godhead is fully God.

### A SUMMARY OF WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE TRIUNE GODHEAD

#### THERE IS ONE GOD

We do not serve three Gods; the God of the Bible is only one Being. This is taught throughout the Bible, (Deut. 6:4,5; Mark 12:29). Jesus was a monotheist, of which is the belief that there is only one God. When God speaks, He repeatedly says that He is the only true God. (Isa. 45:5-6; 1 Kings 8:59-60; Isa. 46:9; Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jas. 2:19; 2 Sam. 7:22; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chron.17:20; Neh. 9:6; Jer. 23:23-24; Psa. 83:18; 86:10; Isa. 40:28; 43:10-11; 57:15.). There is only one God, and He reigns over all people. All men must bow before Him, or they will perish.

#### GOD IS THREE PERSONS

There can be no doubt that we serve only one God. But the Bible teaches that God is a unity of three distinct Persons. (Gen.1:26, 27). God used the words "us" and "our," implying that more than one divine Person was involved in creation.

**The Son is not the Father.** In John 1:1-2, the Word - another name for Jesus Christ (cf. v. 9-18) - was "with" God, a distinction between the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:1; cf. Heb. 7:25; John 5:23, 36; John 14:12; John 4:34; 6:38; John 6:39; 10:29). Clearly, the Father and the Son are not the same Person.

**The Holy Spirit is not the Father.** (John 15:26; cf. 14:26, 16:13; cf. Rev. 2:11; Rom. 8:27).

**The Holy Spirit is not the Son.** (Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 16:7). When we say that God is three Persons, we mean that the Father is not the Son, the Father is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Son; they are all distinct from one another. God has eternally existed as three Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - and each one is fully God, and there is only one God in essence.

#### EACH PERSON OF THE GODHEAD IS FULLY GOD

**First, God the Father is God.** (1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 1:1; John 6:27; Matt. 11:25; Mark 14:36; John 4:23-24; 11:41; 17:11; 20:17; Phil. 2:11.) **Second, God the Son is God.** (John 1:1-18; John 20:25; John 20:28-31; John 10:30-33; Titus 2:13; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20.) **Third, God the Spirit is God.** (Acts 5:3-4; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 2:11-12; Matt. 12:31-33; 1 Cor. 3:16; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 8:9-11; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:2; Jude 20-21.)

#### WHO IS GOD? WHAT WAS GOD DOING BEFORE HE CREATED THE WORLD?

It can't only be "Creator," "Ruler," "Almighty," (John 14:9; cf. John 3:35; John 14:6; John 17:24; cf. Ex. 4:22; Isa. 1:2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4; 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Deut. 1:31; 8:5; 32:6; Psa.103:13; Jer. 3:4, 19; Mal.1:6; John 20:17; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:3; 8:6; Heb. 12:7; 1 Pet. 1:3).

#### THE FATHER LOVES THE SON

(1 John 4:8-9; John 17:24; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:10). The Father's identity is seen through His love for the Son. (Heb. 1:3)

#### THE FUNCTIONAL ORDER OF THE TRINITY

Love best explains the paradox of the Trinity. The Father loves the Son (John 3:35; 5:20). The Son loves the Father (John 14:31). He is submissive to God in all things (John 4:34; 6:38) (1 Cor. 11:3; John 15:9; 1 John 4:19; Eph. 5:25; Eph. 5:22-25; John 15:26).

#### THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT

At the baptism of Jesus we find all three members of the Godhead present: (Luke 3:21-22) Here we find the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:2; John 1:14; cf. Luke 10:21; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

#### FALSE VIEWS OF THE TRINITY - MODALISM - ARIANISM - TRITHEISM - FEMINISM/EGALITARIANISM - CALVINISM

#### WHY THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT

The fact that God is a Trinity should be a precious truth to us, every bit as worthy of being defended as any other important doctrine of Scripture. Without the Trinity, there is no hope of being reconciled with God. (Isa. 59:1-2; cf. Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:5). Without the Trinity, we cannot have confidence in our salvation. (cf. Rom. 4:5). Third, without the Trinity, our worship to God is idolatrous. (cf Ex. 20:3-5; Psa. 96:1-13; Rev. 4:11; Phil. 3:3; John 14:13; Matt. 2:11; 14:33; 21:1, 9; 28:9; Mark 16:1; John 12:13; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:12-14; Rom. 1:25). Fourth, without the Trinity, we lose all satisfying reasons for our existence. (cf. Jer. 2:13; John 17:24; Col 1:16; Eph. 1:6). If there is no Trinity, we see a God who is only one Person - a Person who creates so He can be a creator, who rules so He can be a ruler - a God who did not love before there was a creation to love. Fifth, without the Trinity, we have no hope of religious unity. (1 Cor.1:10, cf. Phil. 2:2; John 17:21).

**CONCLUSION:** If I do not believe in the one God as expressed in the three Persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I cannot be a Christian.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When the word Godhead appears in the English Bible, is it used specifically in reference to the triune nature of God?
2. Why is it not accurate to describe the Trinity with illustrations like a three-leaf clover, H<sub>2</sub>O, or an egg or even shampoo?
3. Do we have to fully understand the triune personhood of God to accept it as true?
4. What was God doing before He created the world?
5. What single word best describes God?
6. What is functional subordination? How does it describe the Trinity? How does it describe the husband and wife marriage relationship?
7. Why is modalism false?
8. Why is tritheism false?
9. How is modern feminism an attack upon the Trinity?
10. How is Calvinism an attack upon the Trinity?